This is Chapter 150-159 of the English Translation of the Japanese Web Novel *Arifureta Shokugyou de Sekai Saikyou.*

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Chapter 150 – Magic's Depth

The first-rate sensation he felt on his lips gradually led Hajime's consciousness to awaken.

"… What are you doing Yue?"

"… Nn? Wake up kiss."

There was such a lovely way to wake up someone in this world. For a part of that riajuu. (TN: Riajuu, a person who is satisfied with his real life. Damn riajuu, just explode)

Hajime returned a light kiss at Yue who was lying down on top of him while kissing him, then he swept his gaze at the surroundings. What entered his sight was the familiar ice wall and a bed he was tucked in, and then several types of furniture.

It seemed that he was inside the mansion made from ice at the deepest part of the Ice and Snow Cavern. While pondering that, Hajime returned his gaze to Yue who was staring at him with moist eyes from a really close range.

"… So we were carried to a room somewhere because we passed out. Yue, what about the others?"

"… Nn, sorry. I woke up just now so I don't know."

Hajime thought that Yue had surely woke up first and grasped the situation before coming to wake him up, but his expectation was wrong. Hajime floated a troubled expression while once again asking Yue, who was still lying on top of him while making lovely gestures, her chin resting in her hands and her bare feet moving up and down in the air.

"… How long have you been awake?"

"Nn… about ten minutes ago?"

"Don't tell me, since then you have been in this position all along?"

"… Nn. Because when my eyes opened Hajime was there."

'Because a mountain is there.' While spouting out a line like a certain mountain climber somewhere, Yue pressed her lips *chuu* at Hajime.

Before Hajime had confirmed that at the edge of his field of vision there was another bed. He also had confirmed that its sheets were disarrayed. In other words, after Yue woke up in the neighboring bed, rather than understanding the surrounding situation or trying to ask an explanation from the other members, she instead slipped into Hajime's bed. Regardless of his passed-out situation from an unexpected accident, she picked the choice of the lovely wakening up.

She was shaken so much in the last trial to the degree that Shia scolded her, after that she finally reunited with Hajime and spoke about her worry, and just when she was about to kiss him with overflowing emotion, it was blocked by the girl power cheat character… now the trial was over already, and her beloved person was sleeping beside her defenselessly… because of that, it seemed that she couldn't hold back.

Really, really, what a… lovely lover she was, Hajime's eyes turned into a wild beast. Yue smiled bewitchingly "Fufu- "to such a Hajime. Her tongue licking her lips very seductively.

"Yue. It seems that I need a little more time before I wake up."

"… Nn. Then, until you are awake… I'll do you."

Their lips piled up once more. Vivid sound colored with dampness resounded inside the room. At the same time, "Nna", a sweet gasping voice caught in the nose resounded.

Just as it seemed that the two might do it until they got naked, at that time, a sound of the door opening was suddenly…

"Nn? You two woke up… waittt, juust whaaat are you two doinggg-!"

The one who entered was Shia. Looking at Hajime and Yue who were entangled on top of the bed with their fiercely disarrayed clothes, her rabbit ears bristled *bosaa!*

"Shia? What's the… Hajime-kun? Yue? Just what are you two doing I wonder? I wonder?"

"——"

Behind Shia, Kaori who peeked her head in materialized a hannya mask behind her. Shizuku covered her red face with both her hands. However, following a cliché, she didn't forget to peek between her fingers' gap. Since she became aware of her love to Hajime, she was also excessively conscious to that kind of act, but she couldn't help but hold interest.

On the other hand, about Hajime and Yue who were interrupted before they went further, they directed their sight to those three while embracing each other. Then they immediately looked at each other, moved their gaze once more to the three, and said out words with splendid synchronization.

"Come back two hours later." X2

In response, the reaction of Shia and others were naturally…

"Are you stupidddd——!!"

"It's obviously not allowedddddd!!"

"…"

Angry roars reverberated in the ice mansion. Only one person was stealing glances at the exposed chest of Hajime with her face still red.

The bed was overturned with Hajime and Yue still on it and then they were dragged out, Shia and Kaori forcibly moved them to the living room at a corner of the mansion. It seemed that Shizuku was still unable to come out of her daze with her eyes still swimming around busily.

At the center, there was a table of ice that didn't feel cold, its surroundings included a leather sofa. Ryuutaro and Suzu were already sitting on the sofa, their eyes were opened wide at Hajime and Yue who were dragged out by their scruff of their necks.

"Oi, oi, just what in the hell…"

"Aa, Suzu somehow understand what's going on here."

It seemed that Suzu could imagine what was going on. Her gaze was directed at the clothes of Hajime and Yue that were mostly still disarrayed. Chasing after Suzu's gaze, it seemed that Ryuutaro also guessed the generality of the event. But right after that, something traversed the room with high speed, *zubishi!* and a loud sound was raised from Ryuutaro's strongly flicked temple.

"Abeh!?"

Raising a strange scream, Ryuutaro rolled behind the sofa. He was pressing on his temple thinking "That's unreasonable-!!" while writhing around.

"… Hmph. That's the punishment for seeing Yue's immodest figure."

"… Nn, jealousy? Hajime, cute."

Yes, what flicked Ryuutaro's temple was Hajime's bullet. A punishment for Ryuutaro who saw 'Yue in disarrayed clothes'… Indeed, it was unreasonable.

"Geez-! Both of you, you are not reflecting! … Just how much do you think we are worrying hereee."

Looking at such a Hajime and Yue who were acting carefree, Shia was trembling in rage. However, in the middle, she lost her momentum and sat down beside the two with teary eyes. Her appearance faithfully displayed just how much she was worried for the two who passed out for an unknown reason right after they cleared the great labyrinth.

"It's just as Shia said. … We were really worried."

"That's right. We wanted you two to quickly show your energetic faces."

It appeared that Kaori and Shizuku felt the same. Similar with Shia, they were directing slightly wet eyes at Hajime and Yue.

Looking at those three as expected even the two couldn't help but feel guilt. The two looked at each other awkwardly and then lowered their heads at the same time.

"Aa, no, really that was my bad. When I woke up a super beautiful girl was kissing me so, my reasoning was blown away… yep, it's the fault of Yue being too cute."

"… Nn, sorry. I should notify you all immediately. … But when I noticed a defenseless Hajime beside me I couldn't hold back. It's the fault of Hajime being too cool."

They were… lowering their head? It felt somehow like that.

"… Both of you, are not reflecting, are you?"

"Haa, it's enough already. More than this is just going to make us tired mentally."

"After looking with awareness of my own feeling, various things are coming to me…"

Seeing Hajime and Yue apologized while naturally whispering love fondly at each other, Shia directed a glare at them and Kaori made a tired expression. Shizuku made an expression that was a loss of words from realizing once more how strong an existence Yue was.

But, at that time, the door of the room made an opening sound. The one who entered was Tio.

"Oo, master and also Yue art safe then. I'm glad, I'm glad. It's the best that what I was doing was just a wasted effort."

"Ah, Tio-san. I'm sorry, I forgot to tell you about this."

Shia's expression turned apologetic looking at Tio whose expression burst into a smile seeing Hajime and Yue's appearance.

Tio investigated the magic circle of the age of god magic and the mansion's library in the worst case that Hajime and Yue wouldn't wake up to determine the cause of their fainting. Shia whose attention was completely taken by her happiness of Hajime and Yue waking up and then by her anger at the two who were flirting without considering other people's feeling had forgotten to contact Tio.

"It's fine, it's fine. In any case, right after master and Yue opened their eyes, they must be doing that kind of thing, weren't they?"

"You really get it…"

"Hmm. That's natural. If I am in Yue's position, I will do the same thing! And then, master who scorns my disarrayed appearance will do that kind of thing and this kind of thing… nh, nh, haa haa."

"And, just what happened to Hajime-kun and Yue?"

"Both of you raised a really pained voice and fainted, that was a really shocking matter."

Kaori and Shizuku beautifully ignored Tio who was beginning to pant with an expression of ecstasy from her imagination and asked Hajime and Yue.

Naturally, Hajime and Yue acted like Tio was not there, they sat on the sofa while showing their intention to explain. Shia and the others also sat on the sofa. The fallen Ryuutaro also sat back on the sofa while rubbing his red forehead. There was no place for Tio to sit. She was kneeling seiza on the floor.

"Now then, the reason why I and Yue fainted… that's right, to say it simply, our head or mind got overheated, something like that."

“Overheated, is it?”

Hajime’s beginning explanation made Shia tilted her head.

“Yeah. At that time, the last age of god magic——’Metamorphosis Magic’ was engraved in our brain, after that, I and Yue were forcefully made to understand something further. The burden of that was too big, and it made us unable to maintain our consciousness.”

“Hmm… a burden so big that master and Yue couldn’t endure… was it about knowing the particulars regarding concept magic?”

“… Nn. As expected, Tio. Your comprehension is fast although you are a pervert. Although you are a pervert…”

It was said twice although it wasn’t important. Although she was a pervert but as always her guessing was outstanding. Tio had been thinking what was the difference between Hajime and Yue with the other members, and she noticed the point that it was only those two who had obtained all the age of god magic. She did that while sitting seiza on the floor and grinning from the numbness in her feet.

Luluo Haltina said that their hand would reach concept magic when they obtained all the age of god magic. And then among these members, it was only Hajime and Yue who had obtained all the age of god magic. Tio who fully remembered even that point conjectured that perhaps the burden of having the knowledge of magic that surpassed the age of god magic engraved in their mind was large.

She investigated inside the mansion thinking of the possibility outside of that for her peace of mind, she did that surely because even with her conjecture she couldn’t just stay still with the condition of the two like that. Her speech and conduct were disgusting, but it appeared that she was worrying from the bottom of her heart, similar to Shia and others.

And then, the guess of such a Tio was right on the mark. Hajime and Yue, after they obtained metamorphosis magic the same as the other, they had the knowledge regarding concept magic engraved further into their mind.

Knowing the reason why Hajime and Yue fainted, Shia and others nodded in understanding. For the time being, they leaked a sigh of relief after hearing that there was no after effect or anything to the two. Kaori pulled herself together and asked something she was the most concerned about.

“Concept magic… with that, we can go back home to Japan, right? By any chance, you two can use it already now?”

“No, not yet. Just like Luluo said, just because you have the knowledge doesn’t mean you can use it. Besides, the knowledge we obtained is also not something like the concrete way of learning or the way to use it, if I have to say what is it then it’s something like hypothesis knowledge.”

“Hypothesis knowledge?”

Shizuku asked by repeating the words. This talk was about the possibility of them returning home. Beginning from Shizuku, even Ryuutaro, Suzu, and Kaori too made a serious expression.

“Yeah. For example, the metamorphosis magic that you guys too are able to obtain this time, how do you guys understand that magic?”

“Eh? Err, let’s see. From the knowledge engraved in our mind, it’s a magic that remakes a normal organism into a monster, isn’t it? Using the magic power of the caster and the magic power of the target organism, it forms magic stone inside the body, with that as the core it’s possible to remake the flesh of the body.”

“Yes. I understand it like that too. Also, it looks like we can interfere with the already existing magic stone of a monster and mix our magic power into it to strengthen them and also make them submit.”

Shizuku and Kaori’s understanding was matching in general.

If it was explained further, metamorphosis magic had enhancement levels. In the case of transforming the normal living thing into a monster, the target would lose most of their reason and thought, and they would move following just their instinct. It was said that wild monsters came from the normal living things. In a particular place and through months and years absorbing the magic element in the surrounding and also with various other factors to naturally produce a magic stone, and the first level of metamorphosis, using metamorphosis magic was exceedingly close to this wild monster.

This wild monster would recover their reason and thought if they were strengthened even more using metamorphosis magic, furthermore, with the magic power of the caster mixing into the magic stone as the cause, it would be like imprinting and the monster would submit to the caster as though toward their parent. It needed not to be said what would happen if from the beginning the magic stone was created only from the magic power of the caster.

With skill, it was possible to pile up the performing of the metamorphosis many times and create a powerful monster to that extent——or rather than saying creating it was possible to grow a strong monster. However, the flesh of the target would break down if the metamorphosis was carried out with immature skill so caution was necessary.

“In other words, this is a magic to create obedient monsters, huh. As expected. Thinking about the steps, that white dragon seems like it has been considerably strengthened, though…”

“Uun, Suzu has only seen it once so she cannot say it clearly but… if Orcus’s monsters are divided in level by each floor, that white dragon is about level three hundred Suzu thinks? Suzu guesses that it’s about three to four times stronger than the monster in the eightieth floor.”

“Ain’t that more of it? It was weakened, but the great barrier of the capital was broken by just one dragon, that one yeah? Even Nagumo, you evaded its breath. Ain’t it about level 400?”

The talk was a little derailed. But Ryuutaro’s guess wasn’t mistaken. The white dragon strengthened by that Freed, if the monster at the floor 80 of the outer layer labyrinth of Orcus was about level 80, then the strength of that white dragon was about five times of that if it was now, then it was about six, seven times stronger.

Hajime’s face frowned for a moment as though he was recalling an irritating guy, but he pulled himself together and returned the talk back to its track.

“Well, in general, you are not wrong. Metamorphosis magic is certainly a magic that creates a monster to follow you. But, that’s a little inaccurate. What is called metamorphosis magic, to define it more accurately… that’s right, I guess it’s a ‘magic that interferes at organic material’?”

“Err…”

Shia’s eyes were swimming in perplexity. Putting aside Kaori and others, for Shia, those were words she was unfamiliar with. It seemed that Tio was also in the same state. Noticing that, Hajime cleared his throat and corrected himself.

“Let’s see… it’s a little lacking in accuracy, but to say it in easier to understand manner, you can also think of it as magic that interferes at material that originated from living thing. In other words, if you feel like it, not just an animal but something like a plant, and also things that are made from that——for example food or paper, this magic can also interfere with that kind of thing. Of course, it can also interfere at the human. The magic stone is nothing more than a byproduct.”

According to Hajime’s further summary, metamorphosis magic wasn’t ‘magic that created magic stone and produced monster’, magic stone was nothing more than energy body created as the result of interfering at the target using one’s own magic power and metamorphosis magic, in reality, it was magic that directly operated at flesh or the likes. And so if one felt like it, it seemed that it was theoretically possible to cause metamorphosis without producing magic stones.

“… Nn, this is only a guess, but the ‘dragification’ of Tio and others of the dragon clan, if the origin is traced, I think it has the root from this magic.”

“Hoho, so the metamorphosis magic is the origin of my race… hmm, I see.”

Sending a glance at Tio who was thinking deeply, Hajime continued his explanation.

“The hypothesis knowledge I said before, that is, in other words, that kind of thing. Age of god magic are magic that interferes at ‘principle’, but we didn’t really understand the exact foundation of that power. With obtaining concept magic as the absolute prerequisite, it was necessary to completely understand all the age of god magic.”

“… Nn. Besides, to understand this is too deep of an abyss, if someone is not in the level that can conquer all the trials, their body and heart won’t be able to endure the burden and they will break.”

That was the reason that in order to arrive at concept magic there was a need to earn all the age of god magic.

The current Hajime and Yue understood that even their understanding until now toward the age of god magic was still shallow.

For example, the creation magic that Hajime obtained the very first, and he used to keep his life until now. It wasn’t ‘magic to assign magic into mineral’ if it was expressed more accurately then it was a ‘magic that interferes at inorganic material’, a magic that was the opposite of metamorphosis magic. And so theoretically this magic should be able to interfere with things like water or salt too, not just mineral.

Furthermore, gravity magic was something that should be expressed as ‘magic that interfere with the energy of star’, not only gravity, theoretically, it could also interfere with things like earth vein or terrestrial heat, bedrock or magma, it wasn’t impossible to use this magic to purposefully generate earthquake or volcano eruption.

Space magic was a ‘magic that interferes at boundary’. Elimination of race-creature gap, formulating new boundary to create spirit world, it could be thought that those kinds of things were also possible.

Regeneration magic was ‘magic that interfere at time’. The use of regeneration magic was more of restoration rather than healing, it was just a portion of it. Originally it was possible to interfere with time itself using this magic, it could catch a glimpse of the past or take a peek at several branches of the procession of time. Shia’s characteristic magic of ‘Future Viewing’ was likely originated from this magic.

To define Soul magic the expression of ‘magic that interfere with negative material possessed by living thing’ showed its true nature the most. To say it specifically, this magic could also interfere with things like energy inside the body that was magic power, heat, electricity, then thought, consciousness, memory. Although this magic was designated as ‘soul’, what Yue and others could exercise with this magic was interference at thought body more accurately. And then if someone could handle this magic perfectly, the caster could personally create consciousness and the like, they could configure it too. To put another way, it was possible to create artificial intelligence using magic.

Expressing sublimation magic as ‘magic that interfere with the information of existing thing’ was more accurate definition. Its function that evolved an ability by a level was, for example, interfering a body information that said level 1 and raised it up to level 2. If the user reached the root, it was possible to browse and interfere with the information of all existing object.

The names of the age of god magic that Hajime and others recognized until now were only given by taking into consideration the interference that was possible to be done using the human body.

By the way, the ‘compass of guidance’ used soul magic to surmise what the user was wishing for, then using space magic it ignored the spatial gap and distance and searched the target, it seemed that the compass used sublimation magic to supplement the information of the target. All of those functions couldn’t be accomplished using the age of magic as they did until now.

After Hajime explained about those things too, in addition, Shizuku’s expression turned complicated.

“I see now. This is real, big, and yet these magics can interfere with fundamental matter. It seems that these surpassed the territory that humans can touch. … But, after hearing all those, I guess that you two still cannot create the concept magic for the sake of returning home then? Based on what I heard, it feels like it has considerable difficulty…”

“Well, certainly it will be difficult. Luluo explained it lightly as the purpose of the utmost limits or something, but in reality, it’s exactly as she said. We need to raise up our ‘wish’ using soul magic and sublimation magic until concept level, then we need to grant it magic power and forcefully materialize it… saying it simply it’s like that, but normally it won’t succeed even using sublimation magic.”

On the contrary, in concept magic the user needed the purpose of that time as the base, so just because it succeeded to be used once didn’t mean in the next times from then on it would be stable to use. Normally it became a magic that was just onetime use.

“… Nn. We have to use Hajime’s creation magic to endow the concept magic to something like the compass.”

“That’s right. Yue’s control ability for magic and my transmutation… we need to match our breath and create an artifact endowed with the concept to cross the worlds. But, we also need a concept for preventing summoning here again, like that… it will take some time for those.”

“It’s not impossible, right?”

“Isn’t that obvious? I’ll make it a success no matter what. I crawled until here for that sake. I can start right away for the returning home artifact, I’ll work out the concept for defending against interference from those guys too without fail.”

Hajime’s eyes looked like it was blazing up fiercely. He had survived through a severe environment and continued to wish earnestly to return home. It was unforgivable to stumble in this kind of place, such fierce will was gleaming inside his eyes.

Kaori and others who saw that had their chest constricted by homesickness thinking “Aa, we really can go home”, tears were gathering in their eyes.

Hajime and Yue looked at each other and nodded once, then they suddenly stood up.

“We are going to try it right away?”

“Yeah. I managed to sort the knowledge while we are talking. It’s like I’m a horse that got a carrot dangled in front of my eyes. I’ve got to try it now.”

Hajime punched on his palm with a snap. Looking at such Hajime, Yue’s hand softly touched him to calm him down. The sensation of the small willowy hand immediately calmed down Hajime’s heart. It felt like a sweet space was going to form once more, so Suzu opened her mouth with somewhat flustered feeling.

“Err, Nagumo-kun. About the magic for going home to Japan, how much time it’s going to take you think? If possible, Suzu also wants to look when it’s completed but… if it’s going to take long, Suzu and others also have to make various preparations.”

“I, see. I don’t think it will take that long if it’s just the magic for going home. After all, no one can say that my desire for going home is not at the extreme. But, for the defense against magical interference from others…. honestly, I don’t know. I also feel like I can make it quickly but…”

“Is that so? Suzu got it. Then, Suzu and others will concentrate on resting until the magic for going home is finished. It doesn’t seem like there is another thing we need to do until we understand whether we can really go home… there is also the metamorphosis magic that we finally obtained, so the journey to the devil territory will be after that. Err, what are Shizushizu and others going to do?”

Suzu decided about her plan from now on and then checked at Shizuku and others. For Suzu, Shizuku had also finally noticed her feeling, she was thinking whether Shizuku would be wishing to be at Hajime’s side from here on or not. While she was at it, she was also confirming whether Ryuutaro was really intending to embark right in the middle of enemy territory together with her.

“Of course, I will go together with Suzu.”

“Me too.”

In respond, Shizuku and Ryuutaro answered instantly.

“Putting aside Ryuutaro-kun, is it fine for you Shizushizu? You finally…”

“What are you saying? This and that are different matters. I cannot just leave Suzu in the care of the two idiots. Besides, we won’t be staying there for long anyway, right? We are going to escape right away after accomplishing our objective and link up with Nagumo-kun. I won’t feel lonely. Besides, I too won’t be able to settle down without saying something to Eri.”

Toward Shizuku who shrugged indifferently, Suzu understood that it was Shizuku’s real feelings, Suzu hugged her while praising “As expected from a woman that makes other woman fall in love, that’s so manly!”, but Shizuku showed a vein on her forehead from getting told she was manly and grounded her fist on Suzu’s head, making her scream.

Suzu changed the topic with teary eyes.

“N, next about Kouki-kun…”

Those words made Hajime went “Hm?” and he tilted his head. And then his gaze swept through the room.

“Now that you mentioned it, where is that guy?”

“So, you only noticed just now that he is not here. … If it’s Kouki, then he is still sleeping in a different room. He has deep damage, so it seems it will still take a bit more until he wakes up.”

It seemed that until now Hajime forgot about Kouki’s existence, to such a person Shizuku explained while making an expression showing a loss for words.

Kouki’s wound should have been completely healed by Kaori, so the deep damage she meant must be the mental damage. It should be possible to heal that too using soul magic that manifests its essential power, but even for Kaori who had grasped on how to use Nointo’s body, as expected it was next to impossible to exercise the deepest mysteries of an age of god magic. Combined with the factor that the more difficult it was to interfere, the deeper the mental damage was, it was appropriate for now to leave it to Kouki’s natural healing.

“Well, it doesn’t matter. After this, I and Yue will seclude ourselves inside the room where the magic circle of the age of god magic is located to create an artifact endowed with concept magic. In the worst case that Amanogawa wakes up during that time, don’t let him be a hindrance.”

“Hindrance you say… no way he gonna do that while you are making the tool for going home, right?”

Ryuutaro objected while making a bewildered expression.

“If that’s the case then that’s fine. But his mental burden was great, and I don’t think it’s going to happen but the possibility that he will get deranged when he wakes up is not zero. Well, this is just for in case. As expected, I don’t think I’ll have any leeway in the middle of working.”

“Leave it to me Hajime-san. I cannot help out, but in exchange, I won’t let anyone be a hindrance,” Shia declared full of confidence with her chest puffed out brazenly.

“Yeah. I’m counting on you, Shia.”

“… I’m relieved with Shia here.”

That strong and reliable appearance and words caused Hajime and Yue to also smile at her with unparalleled trust.

Like that the two went to the room with the magic circle of the age of god magic once more, they vanished behind the thick door while Shia and others were seeing them off.

Chapter 151 – Hajime’s Path

“Is it all okay?” In the living room of the ice home, Suzu muttered to herself with an anxious voice while sitting on the sofa.

Therefore, Kaori who also sat on the sofa asked gently. “Is what ‘okay’?”

“Mmm? All of it? Did Nagumo not fall unconscious? Can we return to Japan, truly? Will Kouki be alright? This trip to the demon territory… this…”

After taking this period to rest, it leaves the body with nothing else to do but think about these various things.

Since Hajime had started to make the artifact using concept magic, they had shut themselves up in their room for the last two hours.

When you include the time that Hajime and Yue had fainted, where they had nothing to do, they had plenty of time to recover. This left them time to think about unnecessary things.

“Suzu-chan… we’re safe. Hajime will get past any difficulty. And with Yue by his side, the impossible only becomes possible.”

“Kaori…”

“In addition, it’s up to Kouki to do something about Kouki. Of course, I’ll help as far as I can. As with Eri, I think… yes, we need to charge forward. There is nothing more to it. Thinking too much will only make you tired.”

To the rough encouragement, Suzu responded instinctively with surprising courageousness. “Kaori… has become handsome. You’ve already have become completely influenced by Nagumo-kun.”

“It is different, Suzu. For a long time, Kaori charges when she can decide. Kaori’s decisions, 90% of the time, are to charge forward.”

“Suzu-chan, It is… Shizuku-chan… so cruel… I am not like Ryuutaro-kun…”

“Hey, Kaori… why is being the same as me considered cruel? Am I noticing casual abuse?” Ryuutaro spat out with a bitter expression which concerned nobody.

Though Kaori wore her lips in a bit of sulk, but she took to heart immediately and fixed her eyes on Suzu.

“Anyway, I don’t know how things will turn out with Eri, but I will follow you and help. We need to get out of there in the confusion if things go bad.”

Kaori smoothly declared something frightful, but it was another word that Suzu was caught on. Blinking in surprise, she responded timidly in confirmation.

“Oh, oh, then Kaori will come with me?”

“Of course, I can’t neglect Shizu and Suzu.”

“But, Hajime…”

“It’s the same as Shizu-chan, it’ll be a while before we have the artifact that will allow us to return. We’ll also need to meet up to Lemia and Myuu. I can’t help with the artifact, so I think what I should do it protect Suzu then…”

“Ah… Kaori is… a good child, a really good child… and, thank you very much.”

“Suzu-chan, what’s with the Kansai accent?”

To Kaori’s words, Suzu made a joke while whipping away a tear. She was too embarrassed to return her sentiment seriously.

“If Kaori comes, you should be fine. Hmmm… before this mistress goes to Goshujin-sama’s world, I should return to my clan as well.”

“That’s right, Tio-san. You’re a daughter of the clan. What’s it like, I had forgotten about that.”

“Well, I mean… I guess you’d like to meet the dragonkin?”

“Well, we have space transfer magic set up so we could go there immediately. It’s definitely beyond the mountains in the north – across the continent on a solitary island.”

Tio gave a puzzled look so Shia recalled from her memory. When they left this world, Tio thought that she might not have the time to visit her family.

“Well…well, that is certainly the case. If I could receive jealous love punishment from Goshujin-sama before departing, that will be… let’s double the speed. Return home through the gate!”

“…If we return and her kin sees her ecstatic expression on her face… they will be shocked. It would be good if it doesn’t become a panic.”

While Tio imagined Hajime’s love and floating a smirk, Shia, and the others had a sick feeling while imagining the unpleasantness of that reunion.

After returning and seeing Tio, who has changed into a deviant, what kind of reaction would the dragonkin have? As Shia imagined it, Hajime would need to take responsibility. Shia let out a sigh as she imagined what should be done with Tio’s family.

At that point, the door of the living room made a noise as it slowly opened.

“Did we stay here…”

“Oh, Kouki. You woke up, how do you feel?”

It was Kouki who had entered. It seems he had awoken to find the other members.

Although it was Shizuku's aim to look aloof, she had immediately hidden her vigilance in a smile while asking about his condition. Kouki smiled back, in the same way, However, it seemed that his expression was shadowed.

"I'm okay, I'm sorry I worried you."

"Even now, it's fine as long as you're safe."

"It seems that I have recovered."

"That's really good."

Shizuku rejoiced at Kouki's recovery. Kouki smiled once more and gazed around the room looking for someone. His expression stiffened as if he was getting nervous. Kaori who saw this answered with a bitter smile.

"If it is Hajime-kun, he's in another room now, so he isn't here."

Well…so…so I probably need to apologize for being a nuisance… in various ways, but…"

Apparently, it seemed like he was no longer rampaging against Hajime like he was during the trial. His mental condition seemed to be relatively calm. Rather, it may be more accurate to say he seemed depressed over calm.

"I don't think Hajime-kun minds, as long as you're not rampaging anymore he wouldn't demand an apology."

"Shia-san… maybe so, after all…"

Kouki wore a sour look full of bitterness. Though Kouki's recklessness has been troublesome, Hajime did not worry especially because it wasn't that inconvenient. The way it was, it could be said to be like a child who had a temper tantrum and struck out.

Though it was certainly murderous intent he had faced, the behavior was stupid and Hajime gave priority to avoid hurting Kaori (and incidentally Shizuku). At least, he had not given a great deal of time and effort, his body and heart having become strong enough to shoulder that troublesome burden.

"Did the sleep snap you out of your delusions, or do you still think Nagumo-kun has brainwashed us?" Shizuku asked severely while narrowing her eyes.

Kouki being unhurt and Kouki being in control were different questions entirely. Hajime likely wouldn't permit him raging out of control a second time, and it needed to be understood that Hajime didn't kill him despite the killing intent because of them.

After receiving the still voice and glare from Shizuku, Kouki quickly turned his eyes. But Shizuku didn't permit such spoiled behavior.

"Kouki, don't look away."

"Well… ah… I do not think that anymore. At that time, it really seemed like…"

Kouki's face held a shadowed expression, but he answered firmly while looking up at Shizuku. For a while, Shizuku looked back at Kouki. Likely to try to understand his thoughts through his eyes. Shia acted similarly.

Eventually, although it was hard to say for certain, they were convinced and showed a tentative assent. Shizuku nodded.

"Well, if it is OK… Kouki. Is there anything you'd like to ask?"

Because the atmosphere was awkward, to change those drifting feelings, Shizuku turned to Kouki.

Were those feelings transmitted to Kouki? Kouki floated a small wry smile. He asked what happened after he had fainted.

And… all of the members except Kouki captured the labyrinth. Hajime and Yue looked into the abyss of concept magic. And at the present, they were shut off by themselves trying to create an artifact for their return.

Although Kouki's expression didn't particularly change as he remained silent and listened, it was obvious that he had wanted to overcome his native self. When he couldn't capture the last trial, it was easy to imagine his inner heart wouldn't be calm.

And has his childhood friend, Shizuku was hesitant on whether she should say was Kouki wanted to hear most. That is what caused Kouki to fall apart in the first place. Kouki made his own convenient interpretations in defiance of Shizuku's attempt to persuade him.

Shizuku waited for Kouki to ask, but decided that the likelihood that he wouldn't hear what she said was high given his situation.

"…Kouki, I came to like Nagumo-kun. I want him to see me as a woman."

"…"

To Shizuku's words, Kouki's expression distorted momentarily. The words were told to him by his childhood friend right at his side. However, the reality of it would take a long time for Kouki to recognize. Shizuku appearing on Hajime's shoulders with a sleeping face that seemed happy and relieved crossed his mind.

"With that, will you follow Nagumo in the future? Nagumo has a favorite, and there is Kaori, too? Shouldn't you reconsider… Shizuku? It's kind of a bad trap…"

While paying close attention as to not leak out black emotions that gushed from his heart, Shizuku shook her head to cover over Kouki's words.

"Kouki, I'm not looking for your opinion. I am merely telling you. Because you are a childhood friend."

"…"

Kouki kept silent with a sour expression not knowing how to speak. Somehow, it was Ryuutaro and Suzu who covered for her with their own glances. In a look, Kaori provided meaning that they would not

struggle for the same man as best friends. It was a quiet expression of affirmation from all three of them. Of course, it was Shizuku's words that were affirming how she felt.

Realizing there was no one to back him up, Kouki erased the expression on his face. It was impossible to dismiss the reality that was unfavorable to Kouki. All those feelings of irritation, frustration, envy, and hatred began to wander for a false point to cling to.

However, there was nothing to rampage with just feelings. This wasn't about Hajime as an object and above all else, it was made clear. The feelings that stagnated darkly didn't have any fangs to bite. This was a big opportunity…

Although Suzu empathized with the dark feelings that Kouki could separate himself from, but either way, he had to get over it himself, he needed to face the problems.

Even with such an attitude caught in the heart, Kouki emitted unwanted emotions and made a sarcastic comment.

"Haha, everyone is that guy's ally. It's a guy who easily kills people and easily abandons…"

"Kouki!"

Suzu spoke up unexpectedly. Shia and Tio wore narrowed eyes. Kaori's smile deteriorated a little.

But Kouki, whose mind was like a child couldn't stop the feelings that had no place to go. Thus, he said…

"If so, at that time, would I fall off a bridge, if it was okay?" (Tn: In other words… maybe I should just kill myself… I think)

To such insensitive and heartless words, Kaori stopped those words that hurt her heart. PASHIN! Kaori's slap made a flashy noise and exploded on Kouki's cheek.

Though her hand also throbbed, Kaori began to talk with an expression that looked regrettable to Kouki who had a hand on his cheek in dumb surprise.

"…Kouki. I think Kouki is an important childhood friend… so don't make me dislike him."

"…or maybe…"

Kouki was at a loss of words from the unexpected shock but still opened his mouth as if he had something to say.

Gou!

An impact resembling wind pressure ran through. Its identity were waves of enormous magical power. Although it should not be "shock transformation" or the like, an enormous amount of magical power spread through the wall of the mansion so that their bodies responded to it in shock.

"This is… Hajime-san! Yue!"

To this obviously abnormal situation, Shia flung herself out of the room at a dash. When Hajime makes an artifact, this kind of current is not usual.

The wave motion of magic continued to pulse intermittently. Magic in each of their bodies was severely stricken. However, Kaori who was startled back by Shia's actions straightened herself and followed Shia immediately.

According to Shia, the wave motion of magical power seemed to be coming from Hajime and Yue. The waves of magical power seemed to increase in density the closer they approached the room the two people stayed in. It was as if a typhoon had hit them directly as they arrived before the room.

The door was already opened as Shia verified that the two were safe. After going in, it seemed to be the case. While protecting her face from the bewitchment that raged on, Kaori made up her mind and stepped inside.

What spread out from there was a scene where the magical power of red and gold became a torrent of spirals. The scene blew off from the center with the Hajime and Yue on their knees facing each other and holding hands. Before the two of them, there was a crystal of a giant and some minerals that emitted a pale light.

"What's happening, Shia… this…"

"I do not know, but they seem to have done something."

As she had already assessed the scene, Kaori asked Shia who's rabbit ears were dancing in the storm of magic. Shia protected her face with her arm and a lower posture but was able to confirm Hajime and Yue's appearances. When she could see they were both safe, she gave out a breath of relief.

If you trace their glance, it seemed a certainty that neither Hajime nor Yue was at risk. However, both of them were concentrating extremely hard. Shia's entering was not even noticed. A large amount of sweat flowed from them. At this moment, it was clear they were focusing on making the artifact with concept magic.

"…If it is safe, it seems better to leave…"

"Well, if I fail as a mistress, I should be punished."

"…You should seem so happy about it, Tio…"

Shia retreated towards the door softly as to not disturb Hajime.

Meanwhile, only Kouki was staring at Hajime. You couldn't see the color of emotion in those eyes, but they seemed to hold down passion and looked dangerous.

"Kouki," Shizuku called out.

Kouki did not answer. Rather, he took a step forward straight ahead, just one step forward.

"Kouki!"

"Tsu…"

Shizuku immediately grabs Kouki's arms. While her trademark ponytail flapped in the magical storm, she looked straight at Kouki with a serious look. In the gaze, as if frightened, revealed shaking. Kouki made a step backward. One step backward.

At that moment…

“What’s this?”

“An image?”

“A dark…cave?”

Suddenly, images began to appear before their eyes. Like a fog projecting a picture instead of a screen, magical light fragments became a medium. To this strange situation, Shia and the others forgot to even leave the room.

At that time, Suzu muttered to herself.

“Somehow, it looks like Orcus.”

“Certainly, speaking of a large cave illuminated by green light, it would be the Orcus Great Labyrinth.”

Tio affirmed Suzu’s guess. Speaking of a cave illuminated by faint green walls, it would be the Orcus Great Labyrinth that was created by digging into veins of Illumination Stone.

However, since the scenery was different from the structure of the upper labyrinth that Suzu knew, she could not say it for certain. This looked like a natural cave that had not been crafted by a human hand. The magnitude of the height and width of the cave was different from the labyrinth Suzu knew.

The sudden situation and mysterious images deepened their bewilderment, but before long the image projected from the angle of the shadow next to a rock at a large crossroads, showed white hair, long hind legs, and deep red lines crawling across its body like blood vessels, and the true colors of the image was realized as the feelings of having been caught by the demon of the rabbit type were transmitted to them.

“This is anxiety? There is also impatience.”

“I also feel fear. This image is a memory.”

“It is probably Goshujin-sama’s. The memory of the place of hell this one heard him speak about.”

Shia’s guess was correct.

Along with the image, feelings were transmitted from the magic that filled the room. Anxiety, impatience, and fear were overflowing due to the clearly abnormal monster he had never seen before. They couldn’t understand what had led such a situation to occur, but they at least understood that the images they saw and feelings they felt were Hajime’s.

Apart from the time after he had met Yue, Hajime did not speak much of the time in hell before that. It was already over, and Hajime did not have a hobby of boasting about his misfortune. It was simply troublesome to talk about it, too.

So, being given the chance where Shia and the others could learn from Hajime’s past that they don’t know about, after exchanging a glance with one another, they stared hard at the image as if to drill a hole in it without leaving the room. To learn the beginnings of the person they loved, it was impossible

for them to leave the room. Similarly, Ryuutaro and Kouki began to concentrate on the image with interest too.

So, at that time, someone raised their voice with an "Ah." In the image, the demon releasing an abnormal atmosphere suddenly charged at him with an amazing power.

"Hajime-san!"

"Hajime-kun!"

Instinctively, Shia and Kaori cried out a warning with a raised voice. Meanwhile, the image moves hectically while the feelings of fear and uneasiness transmitted by the bright red magic swelled up.

They ground their teeth seeing Hajime made sport of by the kick rabbit. And then, when Hajime's left arm was finally smashed, the feelings of anguish transmitted to them caused Suzu to avert her gaze.

"Hajime-san was…such a one-sided…"

"This is the Nagumo-kun that we knew. His fighting strength was equivalent to having none at all…"

To Hajime being one-sidedly toyed with, Shia's expression became teary eyed as she couldn't believe it. Shizuku spills her words to such a Shia while biting her lip.

Before long the image becomes momentarily interrupted because Hajime had closed his eyes when feeling the impending death from the kick rabbit approaching. While Hajime's feelings of terror are spread to them, the image appears again. This time the frightened kick rabbit's image was seen.

The view of the image was changed tracing the kick rabbit's line of sight, and there stood a huge white bear. A glance was all it took to understand the bear was not a normal demon. To prove that, the kick rabbit that toyed with Hajime in the image was easily cut in two and preyed on, while scattering blood around Hajime.

The glint in the claw bear's eyes crosses over through the image to shoot through Shia and the rest. In the case of them today, the power of the claw bear's gaze would be no big deal, however, because of the feeling it had in its eyes that it was looking only at food rather than an enemy and the fundamental fear that was driven into Hajime caused them to shake unconsciously.

What happened after that was too tragic for the girls who loved Hajime.

Being cornered, the left arm was taken, and it was eaten in front of him. The eyes that see him as food and the arm that lost its shape while spewing blood, such a reality was unnecessarily given to him whether he wanted it or not.

The scream that could not be heard was transmitted to them by the magic. Eyes that a human should never show are shown, having part of the body scattered and eaten, breaking down from terror and agony. And without either shame or respectability, he crawled desperately to get even one millimeter further away from the incarnation of terror.

The reflected image is already dark. The transmitted feelings reached a saturation point or were already unable to be defined. Just…Hajime screams, however even that began to weaken as the light of life faded away.

“Haji…me-san….”

Shia is pouring out tears. Nearby, Kaori and Shizuku… Suzu covers her mouth with her hand. Tio’s gaze is severe. Before their eyes the murderous intent to want to tear the claw bear limb from limb welled up.

While they watched, the blackout ended. Hajime, doubting his own survival, advanced to the interior of the wall and found a strange crystal that dripped water. The god crystal and holy water.

Hajime drunk that, holding his broken mind while he cowers in a dark cave. While asking for help…

There where the memory is vague the image became interrupted. However, to substitute for that, the feelings being transmitted increased in density.

Overwhelming loneliness is felt as no one responded no matter how much he asked for help. The darkness in which even his own existence seemed to be swallowed. Hunger to the degree where it seemed he’d go mad. Unending phantom limb pain.

Day after day he bore the torture-like pain. While lying down as if to die, eventually wishing that he could die, however, the taken holy water did not allow that, and so his feelings of hatred with nowhere left to go were directed at his classmates as he came to curse the unjustness of the world.

And yet, in addition to that, he gradually began to improve. Hajime’s heart was dyed the blackest black. The longing to live, and, the murderous intent for existences that are a hindrance.

Hajime began to move. He started to collect holy water in a depression on the ground. He will begin with eating the wolf. His hunger and phantom pain have not changed, and only his energy had recovered, while his features reflected in the pool of water were already another person.

With the glitter of murderous intent shining in his eyes… Hajime slipped out of his cave. His only weapon that could not be called a weapon (transmutation) is freely used to hunt the demons.

“…This is that appearance…”

“I heard about it, but he’s strong.”

Eating the demon’s flesh with his hands and clothes becoming bloodstained, the appearance of Hajime with his face made dirty with blood is exactly suitable for a monster.

And, a scream which isn’t given a voice is transmitted again. The amount of his agony cannot be imagined. Beating his head on the ground many times, with Hajime’s body writhing it is only possible to see the repeated breaking down and regenerating sometimes as it enters his field of vision.

Unable to bear watching the ghastly spectacle with the transmission from the hell of the storm of agony, Kouki and Ryuutaro both averted their gazes. Suzu, looked like she could vomit at any moment, desperately trying to endure it.

Before long the transformation ended. Looking at his appearance in the pool of holy water, the reflection shows the Hajime of today. Still more than the Hajime of today, the deep tenacity and murderous intent overflowed from he who had gotten a strong body and a new power.

And, using the power of a transmutation that could not become a weapon because it is only a common job, he made full use of the raw materials and the other world's gunpowder to produce a weapon after much trial and error that he could use to challenge the claw bear and by crushing it prove his ability to fight.

At the end of a fierce battle where the claw bear is overcome and its flesh is eaten, Hajime becomes self-conscious. In the innermost depths of himself, his true longing has come out.

That is…

–I want to return.

Responding to the desire, the magic in the room pulsed. Before they were aware of it, Hajime's body was covered in the bright red magic power… With Hajime and Yue in the center, the magic power shot up.

However, it was not magic power indiscriminately scattered. It was focused so that it was inhaled in a spiral torrent with the two people at its center.

–I want to return.

Once more Hajime's pure, strong desire was transmitted through the magic power. Deeply touched by such a wish, Shia, and the others tightly clasped their hands at their chests.

The brilliantly shining crimson magic mixed with the golden magic. As the torrent of magic calmed down, glittering lights like the stars of the Milky Way galaxy began to spin around them.

–I want to return to my hometown.

It is quiet; however, everyone cannot help but shake understanding the strength of will being transmitted by that desire. It should exactly be called the will of the utmost limits.

Hajime in the image, after looking up at the sky once, he quietly closed his eyes. In himself, he must have been making certain of his resolution. And, when he suddenly opened his eyes he unhesitatingly faced the interior of the abyss while proceeding down the passage to the depth of the labyrinth.

The magic light the image was projected on was then absorbed by the whirlpool surrounding Hajime and Yue.

Shia's and the others' reaction was generally the same. They were dumbfounded by the extremely violent process Hajime went through to become the Hajime of today.

Shia, Kaori, Tio, and Shizuku shed tears from the emotions that even they did not understand how seriously far Hajime had gone, but at the same time also faintly floated smiles feeling proud that he could stand back up again after crawling up.

Suzu and Ryuutaro couldn't speak as if they were simply overwhelmed, with somehow assenting looks on their faces as they thought "I can't match this".

They thought they'd survived some truly rough battles, but they'd always had the support of Meld and the other experienced knights in the order, and above all, had been surrounded by comrades with cheat

abilities. When they tried to imagine whether they could truly, all by themselves, get through all that hardship and crawl out of the abyss, they shook their heads. Even the scene they were seeing now was just the beginning. They didn't think that they would be able to handle it at all.

And Kouki… gazed into empty space vacantly, as if his power had left him. In his heart, it crossed his mind how he'd just said: "If I'd been the one to fall into the abyss…"

Up until now, Kouki had actually thought that Hajime's strength was unfair. Even though Shizuku had said Hajime must've had a horrible experience, the idea was completely abstract to him. Kouki had seriously thought that Hajime was a guy who did whatever he pleased and easily obtained power just by falling into the abyss.

But now that he'd ended up knowing Hajime's way of obtaining it, it was so incredible it blew away those thoughts.

('I want to return'… huh.)

He whispered it in his mind. A doubt welled up: do I actually desire to return home as much as him? At the same time, when he compared his thoughts when he'd declared that he would save this world as the hero everyone needs, with Hajime's pure and intense wish, he had a feeling it seemed very cheap.

(N-No… I'm not wrong. Nagumo's feelings… I understand them, but… But, even so… And, now, Shizuku's also… He's taken everything from me…)

He desperately shook off the self-criticizing emotions that floated through his mind.

As Kouki engaged in a mental dialogue with himself, a change occurred with Hajime and Yue. To be precise, with the crystal structure and mineral in between them.

It was wrapped in bright red magic. The shape gradually changed, or rather, it united as if to prove it was taking in magical power.

"Is that a key…?"

"Well, it looks like an antique key made out of crystal."

Shizuku added to Kaori's mutterings. It was shaped between Hajime and Yue, with a regular dodecahedral crystal body on the side of the hand. It was a key with a terribly sophisticated and complex magic line drawn in the planning part of the trip.

It was created with the fusion of the god crystal and other minerals, finishing as an antique key that captures the beautiful artworks that incorporated a lot of magical powers from Hajime and Yue, decorated in gold designs with a red crystal.

And just after the shape was perfectly formed, Hajime and Yue who did not make movements until now opened their eyes with their hands connected. It seemed that nothing was reflected in their thin eyes, which seemed to be looking at something only visible to the two of them.

In a strange way, the atmosphere felt mysterious, there was a sound that someone swallowed with a gulp of saliva. The next moment, the two lips trembled in time. Then the words spun from a small opening mouth…

“Open the door to the place you wanted.”

A moment later, a torrent of dazzling light like a fixed star blew up around the two. The flow of the galaxy that once calmed down dyed the room into pure white light as if it had caused a supernova explosion, and painted everyone’s consciousness with white as well.

Chapter 152 – The Key That Opens the World Door

Along with Hajime and Yue’s words which sounded like a prayer, light explosively painted over the room as well as their consciousness. It was mainly Hajime and Yue’s strong wills supported in the alignment that were filled inside that light.

The large torrent of will made Shia and others unable to think of anything and they fell into unconsciousness, but that was only for a moment. Just before their limp bodies hit the floor, the pure white that overfilled their mind vanished like clearing mist.

Even while staggering for a bit, all present restored their postures and shook their heads. They then saw a beautiful radiance in their sight. Crimson and gold radiances that felt as if they were sucking up all the light covered every inch of the surface of that transparent key. It was a characteristic artifact that looked antique with its crystal form that had a complicated and delicate pattern and twelve exact sides—the ‘Crystal Key’.

“Wait, Hajime-san! Yue-san! Are you two okay-!”

Shia returned to her senses with a ‘hah’ and rushed toward them in a panic. Beside the Crystal Key, Hajime and Yue were lying down with their hands still holding each other while looking like they were passed out. Kaori and others were also rushing in a moment after Shia.

“Kaori-san, the two of them…”

“… Hm, they are fine. Looks like they just fainted. The cause is magic power exhaustion.”

After examining the two with a serious expression, Kaori answered with a smile towards the anxious Shia. The examination result made Tio and others breathe out in relief too.

Kaori extracted magic power from the magic crystal and gave it to both of them at the same time using the technique of magic power transfer. Then, as if to prove that her examination result was correct, Hajime and Yue leaked out groaning sounds while opening their eyes thinly.

“Aa? … What happened?”

“… Nnu. The artifact…”

Kaori explained the situation as Hajime and Yue rose up while shaking their heads, she also handed over the Crystal Key as she explained.

“Both of you passed out from magic power exhaustion. For the moment, I divided the magic power of one magic crystal equally between both fo you. As for the artifact, I don’t really understand it but…”

“I see. Thanks, Kaori. It has been a long time since I passed out from magic power exhaustion. I didn’t really know the right amount needed, so we did it at full strength at that moment but… the next time we will be able to regulate it I think.”

“… Nn. It’s fine. I grasped the trick somehow. Though the problem is whether we can manifest a will to the degree that can be sublimed into the concept.”

Yue answered Hajime’s words while making a pondering look. Hajime examined the Crystal Key in his hand with his magic eye stone. The artifact contained the magic power that couldn’t be compared with all the other artifacts he had created until now.

“… It’s a satisfying result. I feel a large power in it. The sensation feels like the compass of guidance.”

Hajime made a satisfied smile while designating a coordinate towards a certain spot using the ‘Compass of Guidance’ for a test. Then he poured magic power into the crystal key to activate it and thrust it out to the front. Even if ‘Open the door to the desired place’ was said, but if the distance of the destination and the image of the connected place couldn’t be imagined to a certain degree, then the space wouldn’t be connected.

The thrust-out crystal key was similar like the space transfer key-shaped artifact ‘Gate Key’, it plunged into space where there was nothing and ripples spread just like the creator Hajime imagined.

However, it carried a magic power that couldn’t be compared with a ‘Gate Key’. Furthermore, different from the ‘Gate Key’ that had the coordinates fixed beforehand, there was a need to fix the space coordinate with just this one crystal key, so it took a little more time. In addition, it was sucking his magic power steadily.

Hajime frowned at the magic power that was flowing out as though the plugging cork had come out, even so, he still twisted the crystal key next. And the result was the space in front of him shook, an ellipse hole began to open.

From the hole for some reason there was beating sounds *bishi-bashi-* and captivating sound “Aan!” of a woman that were audible.

Before long, inside the gate that had opened completely…

“This shameless female pigggg. I’ll make you ascend to heaven!” (TN: The ascend to heaven should mean die/passing away in Japan, but the kanjis forming the word can also be read as rising to heaven)

“Aa! Kam-samaaa! As expected, from Shia’s honored fatherrr! Amaziiiiing!!”

The drooping figure of Arutena being lashed with an ecstatic expression on her face while the figure of Kam who was doing the lashing were displayed.

The suddenly manifested scene that looked extremely gruesome in a different meaning from the scene some time ago made Hajime and Yue’s jaws drop, as well as every other member other than Tio.

At the same time, perhaps sensing the presence of Hajime and others from across the gate, Kam was turning back with “Oh?” expression, he caught the appearances of Hajime and the others ahead of his gaze and his eyes opened wide with a snap.

“Bo, bossss!? Wh, why are boss’s gate, in this kind of place!”

“Eh? Wait, Shia! Also, Hajime-sama and group too!”

Toward the shocked Kam and Arutena, Hajime and Yue spoke with cool words.

“… Yoo. Looks like we are intruding in the middle of your fun.”

“… Nn. Who can imagine that you two are in that kind of relationship? Shia, live strong.”

“Fufu, oh my comrade, Arutena. It seems that thou found a good master.”

Ignoring Tio who was strangely joyful, Kam was “Thi, thi thi thi thi, this is misunderstanding desuu!”, he was desperately making excuses towards Hajime and Yue’s manner of speaking with a tone that was exactly like his daughter but…

There was a rabbit that returned to her senses while trembling all over. The violent emotion rising up from inside her body became undulating magic power that burst out. Shia who was standing up wordlessly took out Doryukken with a sway. And then with eyes that lost their light, she glared over at Kam and Arutena across the gate. *jakin!* Such sound was raised and the muzzle of the cannon mode for Doryukken was aimed.

“Wa, wait, Shia! You are making a severe misunderstanding! Father is by no means-“

“Shia! Kam-dono is a magnificent person, isn’t he! As expected of Shia’s honored father! I who was only trying to look at Shia’s personal effect just for a little is treated this violently! Furthermore, his strength control is exquisite!”

Kam’s desperate justification was violently smashed by Arutena smilingly. “You bitchh, shut your mouth a bit!” Arutena’s body shuddered all over from the eye glint Kam directed at her. It appeared that it had been already too late for her.

And then it appeared that Arutena was being condemned for fishing through Shia’s left behind personal effects as she pleased. But even though there was such a circumstance which seemed plausible, Shia witnessed this abnormal scene where her flesh and blood father looked relatively high-spirited in swinging the whip against Arutena more or less? A girlfriend of the same age…

“Just die all of you-, these perverts-!”

The trigger was pulled with no questions asked. Burst slug bullets were fired. Hajime closed his eyes with a prayer so they could enter nirvana while closing the gate the moment the bullet passed. Just before the gate was completely closed, there was an explosion sound with audible “Gyaaaaa!” and “Aaaaaan!!” screams, yet there was nobody in this place who paid that attention.

“… Nn. Shia, be strong.”

“It’s fine Shia. That’s… right, that’s only a bit of momentary madness. Your father should have opened his eyes with the attack just now, surely.”

"… Hics, Yue-san, Kaori-san, thank you for your consideration desuu. But, my father surely won't die with just that much, so before we depart to Hajime-san's world I'll stop his breathing first desuu … uu, I'll make him into mince meat desuu."

It appeared that in proportion to the amount of magic power the crystal key used it was possible to literally 'open a door to the desired place', the experimental use of the concept magic endowed artifact 'Crystal Key' which was done casually turned up a result that made a daughter resolve herself to kill her father.

"Aa, what to say, Shia? I'll correct Kam's fault, so anyway, stop crying."

"Uu, Hajime-saan!"

Shia leaped into the chest of the wryly smiling Hajime.

At the side, "Nagumo-kun and Tio-san's relationship is not that different, though…" those words that Suzu whispered were beautifully ignored.

After that, the members whose expressions were at a loss for words because the serious atmosphere was blown away pulled themselves together as they gathered in the living room once more.

"Now then, in the first testing, there are various bad performances that stood out but…"

Hajime confirmed that everyone had sat down and he lifted up the crystal key so that everyone could see it, and then with a wide grin, he resounded those words, the words of hope.

"The method to go home is in our hands."

At that moment, it was Suzu who was the first jumping up and expressing her joy. Lured by that, Ryuutaro raised a happy roar while making a guts pose. Shizuku and Kaori hugged each other with a wide smile. Even Kouki whose expression had been dark all this time smiled faintly.

"Even though I say that, to make a concept that will obstruct future summoning, it will be a harder compared to making a concept for going home. Especially as an aspect of the will. It seems that trial and error are going to be necessary, so we still cannot go home for a while."

"That cannot be helped. Even so just with hearing that we can go home… that's real… amazing. Hics, Hajime-kun, thank you…"

Kaori was moved to tears while clutching Hajime's hand from the side tightly.

That 'thank you' was filled with various meanings. It was surely also including her feeling after looking at those images. About how he had survived, about how he didn't give up not any one thing, about how he rushed to her when she was in danger, about how he got angry several times for her because she was important to him, and then now, about how he obtained the method to go back home… various meanings were really filled with that thanks.

Hajime scratched at his cheek using his hand that wasn't clutched while shrugging his shoulders helplessly, then he gently hugged Kaori back. For a moment, Kaori's eyes opened wide with her shock plain to see, but she quickly became all smiles and embraced back *gyuuuut* tightly. She also nuzzled her face on Hajime's chest.

Even Yue gave an expression as if to say “Well, I’ll forgive it this once”. She shrugged her shoulders and smiled to the fawning Kaori.

On the other hand, Shizuku was staring at Kaori with a little envy, but she instantly sent her gaze at Kouki and shook her head and her gaze became pleasant. If she had to speak her mind then she also wanted to be spoiled by Hajime, but thinking about the possibility of Kouki’s unstable mind, she restrained herself.

But, although she was reading the mood she also had resolved herself, to be honest just before this so she was scheming how to secretly get spoiled by Hajime later on. She didn’t understand whether she could overcome her shyness and properly asked to be spoiled but… at the very least she swore that she would hold his hand! She set that small objective.

Despite the fact she had already kissed his cheek, normally Shizuku was thoroughly innocent to the end.

Hajime somehow guessed Shizuku’s sentiment from her gaze where such cute ambition was residing, yet he looked the other way and gently caressed Kaori’s hair while talking about the matter from here on.

“Anyway, I’m thinking to go to meet Myuu and others while also striving to create the artifact for summoning obstruction. Opening a gate to their place is also fine but, the crystal key is something that uses magic power in proportion with the connecting of the space, so if we are going to open a gate until earth then magic power of three or four times my whole magic power is going to be necessary, that’s why I don’t want to use it as much as I can.”

By the way, the twelve surfaces crystal attached at the handle side of the crystal key had the function to store the amount of magic power that could be used to open a gate to earth once. Perhaps it should be said that it was expected from a concept magic that fuel consumption would be extremely bad.

Even the gate he experimentally opened to the sea of trees just now used up a considerable amount of the magic power Kaori restored to him. If it was transportation inside the same world, using the ‘Gate Key’ was far more convenient although it was necessary to set ‘Gate Hole’ as the destination beforehand.

By the way, ‘Gate Key’ was something developed while they were staying in the capital, so there was none put in the above sea city of Myuu and her mother Lemia. To go meet them, they would use the airship ‘Fernir’.

“Then, during that time when Suzu and others go to the territory of the devil. … since they got their hands on the age of god magic after much pain, it is possible if Suzu wants to go there she can be accompanied by a powerful monster but…”

Thanks to their well rest their magic power and vitality had almost recovered perfectly. If it was now, they could attempt to invoke age of god magic.

But, unfortunately, the inside of the ice and snow cavern only had frost type monsters. Putting aside they were inside the labyrinth where flame magic was hard to be used, it would be easy to have their weak point aimed at in the outside world. Also, their main strong point, that their regeneration ability made use of the surrounding ice, also couldn’t be expected. Saying it clearly, they were monsters that

didn't suit to follow them to the outside world. The reason why there was no frost type among Freed's monster was also for this reason.

Hearing that, Hajime made a little thinking face and suddenly took out a 'Gate Key' that he threw at Suzu. In panic, Suzu's hands moved and somehow caught it before she tilted her head.

"I and Yue will rest a little more until our magic power recovers completely. That gate key is connected at the gate hole set in Fair Bergen, so how about you try making the monsters from the Sea of Tree follow you? There are a lot of monsters there skillful in manipulating their presence. If you make them submit and strengthen them, I think they are going to be fairly useful."

"I see… yes, Suzu will try it. Thank you, Nagumo-kun!"

Hajime waved his hand listlessly at Suzu who was smiling in delight.

As the result, Suzu and the others would go to the Sea of Trees to hunt for monster while Hajime and others were resting. Kouki went with Suzu's group under the pretext of helping but surely that was simply because he hated to be left behind with Hajime, such hypothesis didn't seem to be wrong looking from Kouki's awfully complicated expression.

Furthermore, Yue, Shia, and Tio were staying behind. They weren't going to embark to the devil territory, so it was unnecessary for them to expand their battle strength. Only Kaori who would go with Suzu's group because she was worried for Shizuku.

After that Hajime and his group for a while focused on recovering their magic power and replenishing magic power into the magic crystal while passing the time in relaxation. Even Hajime was somewhat drifting off the calm atmosphere that he had never shown until now. He even allowed the wanting Tio to an embrace and caress, looking at Hajime who was exposing a somewhat sweet atmosphere, it was Tio herself who was the most shocked.

The procurement of the method to go home surely had granted leeway at Hajime's heart. Tio who made a pass in the hope to get abused was unexpectedly embraced with gentle gaze and hand gesture, Tio was acting shy and fidgeting bashfully so much that it would make anyone watching want to tsukkomi "Just where has the usual pervert gone!?" while fawning at Hajime with her all.

"Muu, master is kind… I thought that being hurt was the best, but this is also not bad in its own way, or perhaps I should say that this is a frightfully happy feeling. Though it's also embarrassing to the same degree."

"Tio-san, if only normally you are also like this, you will be a charming female without any fault at all, yet despite so…"

"… Nn. As I thought, perhaps, Hajime should take responsibility."

Looking at Tio who was entrusting her body on Hajime's chest with melting expression while her face was bright red, Shia and Yue were smiling wryly while whispering. Yue's statement made Hajime couldn't help but smile bitterly.

"Well, after this far, if I hear Tio calling another man as master as it will really not be a good feeling in that case…"

“Ho, hou? Ma, master. Wha, what kind of meaning it has… by some possibility, similar like Shia, I too…”

“You know, like if a worthless mongrel that I’ve already got attached emotionally at suddenly wagged its tail at another guy as easily as flipping over the hand, it will feel irritating, right?”

“Nnn-, in a moment like this, to be treated like a dog… furthermore it had ‘worthless’ attached. Haa haa, to be spoiled and made to have an expectation before got abused, what an advanced technique. Haa, haa, nnaa, it’s just unbearable!”

The worthless dragon that was in heat eternally pushed her face nuzzlingly on Hajime’s chest while her lower body was rubbing close at his waist. However, looking objectively at Hajime who was continuously making such Tio delighted all the time, he was also just like her. Yue and Shia’s exasperated gazes stabbed on Hajime.

While doing such stupid thing, by the time the replenishment of magic power at all the magic crystals was over, a gate opened once more and Suzu and co went back. Behind the girls, large tiger, and wolf, and then snake and so on, monsters that were high ranked even inside the sea of trees were there. It appeared that they successfully managed to make those monsters submitted.

after that, Suzu and co increased the strength of the submitting monsters using reinforcement under the simple guidance of Yue and Tio. In addition to the help of Yue and Tio, the monsters that were considerably strengthened were attached to the collar made by Hajime. The collar had a gate hole inserted in it if Suzu and co used the gate key then they would be able to call the monsters anytime. In ordinary times, they could just leave the monsters to do as they pleased in the sea of trees or anywhere.

Like that the magic power of Hajime and Yue were also recovered, finally they were going leave the Ice and Snow Great Labyrinth. Hajime and his group would travel around all the places with people who wanted to go home together with them and the people they wanted to say goodbye to while endeavoring to create an artifact to hinder summoning. Suzu, Shizuku, Kaori, Ryuutaro, and Kouki, the five of them would head to the devil territory where Eri was located.

“Hajime-san, here.”

When they exited the ice mansion, Shia handed over a pendant that was modeled after a dripping water drop. Inside the bluish transparent stone that was like ice, the crest of Vandur Shune was hollowed. It was the proof that they had conquered the Ice and Snow Great Labyrinth. After Hajime and Yue fainted, a part of the wall inside the room melted and this proof appeared to be collected.

Receiving that, Hajime walked above the magic circle drawn on the foothold right in front of the fountain. The moment Hajime’s foot stepped into the magic circle…

biki biki-

Such a sound was audible and the fountain before their eyes began to freeze, it was gradually swelling up. Like that it became a huge egg-shaped ice mass that was almost ten meters, before long the expansion and freezing stopped, right after that, *barin!* such a sound was raised and the ice scattered apart.

What appeared from inside the broken remains was a dragon made from ice. A magnificent lustrous dragon that looked transparent as though it was created from crystal.

The ice dragon lowered its head directly below Hajime's feet where its long neck made a slope. It appeared riding this ice dragon was the shortcut for this great labyrinth.

"This is also a fantastical shortcut, huh."

"… Nn. A present?"

"This consideration is far removed from the repulsiveness of the trial's content, isn't it?"

Each of them let out their impression while nodding at each other, then they crossed the neck where the scales were like a bridge and rode on its back.

Immediately after, the ice dragon flapped its wings grandly and ascended in one go. The ice ceiling was approaching in the blink of an eye, but just before they crashed the ceiling melted and a hole opened, a cylinder pillar was created there.

The ice dragon didn't drop its speed at all and charged into that path.

The sound of cutting wind resounded in their ears and chilly wind caressed their skin, "The only dragon who master can ride is just me… does master want to change rides[even now?" while enjoying such nonsense from a certain someone, they soared inside the ice tunnel for ten-odd seconds. The ice dragon Hajime and the rest rode finally flew into the visible light of the surface.

They were thinking whether they would be let down on the ground right after that, but the ice dragon didn't show any sign of stopping at all and continued to climb into sky. And then without stopping it charged into the cloudy sky of the Shunee Snowfield. *Boba!* With such sound, the dragon flew out and it began to elegantly soar above the cloud sea while being brilliantly illuminated by the sun.

"From the position of the sun we are heading to the northwest. … It seems that it is kindly sending us until the border of the snow field."

"… Nn. Miledi and Meiru should follow this example."

"I get the feeling that the female camp of the liberator is just unscrupulous."

The west of the snowfield was the territory of the devil, at the north was Raisen's Grand Canyon, at the east was Haltina's Sea of Trees. Advancing at the northwest like this meant that they would be let down at a place where it would be easy to go to the devil territory or to the north continent. Furthermore, they didn't really feel the cold air of the sky, so it seemed a simple barrier was spread from the intermediary of the ice dragon.

Indeed, they wanted to be spared from getting tossed out into the snowfield of extreme cold after conquering the great labyrinth, but after thinking about the deed of a part of the liberators, "Such consideration!" this made Hajime and others a bit emotionally moved like that.

And then Shia's guess was surely not mistaken. A woman who was an expert in irritating people, a woman who tossed them into the sea while saying it was a shortcut, a woman who forcefully made people love cockroaches… surely the male liberators in the past was considerably made to go through hardships of this and that which were caused by those women without doubt.

While thinking of such a thing, the ice dragon was gradually beginning to lower its altitude. It appeared they had approached near the landing place. Perhaps the ice dragon couldn't go out of the snowfield, it seemed that it wouldn't go through the sky and brought them outside the boundary, it once more plunged into the cloudy sky.

And then it softly landed on a spot that was just a stone throw from the boundary. Hajime and others reflexively said a polite thanks to it. The ice dragon shook its tail as though to say not to mind it and once more it soared and vanished inside the snowfield.

Even while thinking gloomily about the snowfield that covered their sight, the boundary of the snowfield was just right there so Hajime and others moved with quick steps.

But, at that time, Hajime's senses and Shia's rabbit ears caught something. The eyes of the two narrowed dangerously.

"Everyone, be on guard. Various things are happening outside the boundary."

Hajime's caution made nervousness run through them. Everyone held their weapon in hand while coming out at the other side of the blizzard that blocked their sight.

Over there was…

"As expected you all are coming out from here. It's the same like my time… And, has every one of you conquered the labyrinth? Oh, white-haired young man."

"Fufu, Kouki-kun. Long time no see. Are you healthy?"

A white dragon that was two-sizes bigger and Freed that was riding above it, a lot of monsters that were mainly grey dragons, Eri who spread wings of gray magic power, and then, there must be a few hundred of them, many women with the same face growing silver wings 'the apostle of true god'—Nointo, they all were lying in wait.

Chapter 153 – Devil King's Invitation

Surely there were easily a few hundred bodies there. They covered the whole field of vision, a large number of monsters and Nointo. And then, Freed Bagua and Nakamura Eri seemed to be followed by the rest.

The two of them cracked jokes perhaps as an expression of their composure. After giving a backward glance at Kouki and the others, they were at a loss of words from the shock. Hajime narrowed his eyes dangerously. The string of his killing intent had been pulled until just before it snapped, what was left was only releasing the arrow of a sure kill.

Although Freed and his group should have been feeling the abnormal pressure of such a Hajime on their skin, even now, their composure didn't break. There was one reason. Because they were surrounded by 'the apostles of the true god' who had the exact same appearance as the current Kaori.

Inside his heart, 'As expected how unpleasant. What a bunch that are like cockroaches.' Hajime spat out that curse, but Kaori had the same appearance with the Nointo and twitched with a start, perhaps from a woman's instinct. Hajime quietly averted his thinking to search for a way to annihilate the enemy.

Previously, a mortal combat unfolded when Hajime faced one Nointo, but in the present, the spec of his body and weapons were raised using sublimation magic, so if it was one on one he should be able to finish Nointo without even using 'Limit Break'. He didn't feel like he'd lose even if he had to take on a large number of them at the same time.

Hajime exchanged glances with Yue and the others at his side for an instant. Now, when they were just about to release their killing intent to follow the saying of 'victory goes to the one who makes the first move'. As though to beat them to the punch, Freed opened his mouth once more.

"Don't be so rash. Right now, I don't have the intention of indulging myself in killing each other with you. Though I greatly wished for you to grovel on the ground and beg for your life."

"Hee, then, what are you coming for? I thought that you fell to despair toward the incompetent god who can only throw a tantrum and decided on suicide, though?"

Hearing Hajime's ridiculing tone, Freed's eyebrows twitched in reaction.

What Hajime said as 'incompetent god' was, of course, referring to the god Ehito. With Nointo's presence here, Hajime's conjecture previously——that Ehito didn't differentiate the race, that he was the god of every race and how they all were his toy. And then, the god that the devil race worshiped was perhaps Ehito himself falsifying his name or possibly Ehito's underling——seemed to be spot on.

And for how much Freed understood about that truth…

"… I won't be provoked by that. This too is for the command my lord bestowed to me. I am merely executing that command."

"Is that so. And? Loyal dog Freed, what kind of present(command) you got?"

"… My generous lord will shut his eyes even toward the shameless acts of all of you. He is inviting you to his castle. We are the greeting for that. This impossible fortune for you to be able to have an audience with that honored person. You can tremble on your legs with excitement."

"Haa?"

Freed's state showed quietness that they had never seen until now. It was unclear what he was thinking. While putting on a particularly expressionless face, Freed informed them of his words using a voice without intonation. Hearing Freed like that, Hajime unintentionally leaked out a taken aback voice. In various meanings, there was a lot of points that he could retort at. Even Yue and the others at his side sent Freed doubtful gazes.

"That Ehito guy or Aruv something is a god, right? Why is he in a castle, huh?"

Anyway, for the time being, Hajime asked about the most questionable thing. Toward that, Freed answered that question with a bland tone, however as though to show what an extremely great honor it was, he spread both his arms like an actor standing on the stage.

"Aruv-sama is certainly a god——he is the retainer of Ehito-sama… but at the same time, he is also the king of us the devil race——he is also the devil king. He manifested from the divine world into this dirty world, passing through a long time, he handed down guidance to us the devil race for the sake of a great objective."

It appeared the true identity of the devil king was the god itself that was called as ‘Aruv-sama’. Also, the truth of how the devil king equals Aruv-sama seemed to be a hidden matter that was known only to an extremely limited number of people. Freed expressed joy that couldn’t be hidden because he was included in that really small number of people. From his way of speaking, it seemed he knew it only very recently, though…

“… Great objective, huh. Then, how much is the devil race is being made to dance, I wonder.”

“What are you saying?”

“No? I’m praising the devil king-sama here just how awesome he is yeah.” (TN: The way they call the devil king here is using maou. But sometimes Hajime is also called using that word maou, so I’m using devil king to call this king of the devil race while to refer Hajime I’ll use demon king.)

“…”

Freed who was sharp-eared noticed Hajime’s murmur, but he responded with a shrug and a frivolous reply. As expected, he got irritated and his temple twitched convulsively.

But, there with a tone even more frivolous than Hajime, Eri opened her mouth feeling that the situation was troublesome.

“Hey, Freed. Don’t just keep prattling on and on, finish it quickly. After all, I want to quickly pass sweet time with Kouki-kun seee.”

“… I know.”

It appeared that Freed did not think well of Eri. He clicked his tongue while fixing his collar as though to gather himself. And then just when he was about to say something, a desperate voice from Suzu raised to interrupt him.

“Eri-! Suzu is-… that-, with Eri-“

“Hm? Whaaat, Suzu? You are carefree like usual huh… no, you don’t seem to be like that, I guess? What? I wonder if you want to vent your pent-up feelings? Well, if you want to cry then you can just cry as you like, can’t you? For me, it doesn’t matter thoughhh”

“Yo, you are wrong-. Suzu is just, wanting to speak with Eri one more time!”

Eri looked down while chuckling at Suzu with her hand waving as though to drive away a dog, to that Suzu spoke desperately while her words got choppy. However, her words couldn’t be formed skillfully in this too sudden reunion with the one she wanted to reunite with.

To such a Suzu, as though to show that she didn’t have interest, Eri averted her gaze. Seeing that, Kouki finally returned to his senses and asked about Eri’s bizarre appearance with a hoarse voice.

“E, Eri… that appearance, what’s with that?”

Eri who was talked to by Kouki showed a full smile that was different compared to when she talked with Suzu. Although it was a warped smile that made one felt faint coldness somewhere in it.

“Kouki-kun! How is it? It’s lovely, right? You see, Maou-sama gives me a new power seeee. Because even though I just want to live sweetly with just Kouki-kun only the two of us, there are a lot of shitheads that become a hindrance even for just such a meager wish. It’s fine! The trash that bothers Kouki-kun, allll of them will be cleaned up by me okayyy! We are going to live together just the two of us foorever and eeeeeeever, okayy.”

“E, Eri…”

Eri cackled while rotating in circles in the air with a feverish tone and an expression plain to see. The gray wings growing on her back weren’t even black or white. They gave off a dirty impression as they flapped together with Eri’s motion, scattering gray feathers everywhere. The gray feathers dancing down in flutters fell on the ground, and then the touched spots instantly disintegrated.

Without any doubt that was the same disintegration ability as Nointo.

“Don’t tell me, just like Kaori… no, that’s Eri’s body… you were given only the ability?”

Shizuku who was glaring silently at Eri frowned while considering the situation.

But, before she could obtain the answer, *gyaki!* an ominous sound resounded. It was the sound of Hajime’s partner being readied that everyone had heard so many times.

“Anyway, it’s okay to slaughter them, all right?”

“… Nn. There is no reason to accept the invitation.”

“Blow them away and finish this desuu!”

“… As expected, with this many people having the same face lined up, even though I understand they are not me, it’s still eerie.”

“But, their way of inviting art too poor. To be this manner less, they hath to be chastised just a bit.”

At the same time Yue, Shia, Kaori, and Tio, the four of them were also showing intent to attack. Yue and Tio raised their hand straight up, Shia shouldered her Doryukken, and Kaori spread her silver wings with a flap.

Hajime’s killing intent was naturally directed at Eri too. Her grating cackling voice in the ear and ugly warped expression were getting on his nerves. The wish of Suzu was in a corner of his head, so thinking that at the very least he was going to pulverize her four limbs, he aimed Donner’s muzzle. Schlag was aimed at Freed.

But, just before the triggers were pulled, something silver was generated in front of Eri and Freed like a shield. In front of the dubious Hajime and others, the silver thing had noise that ran through and warped like jelly for a moment before it projected the scenery of somewhere.

A space magic. ‘Hermit Mirror’ ——a magic to projects in space the scenery of the faraway place.

What was projected in the hermit mirror were several impressive pillars standing, red carpet spread on the floor in a large hall. From there the camera changed its viewpoint and the image moved.

What they could begin to see was a place like an altar with a throne put there. As expected the projected place was a castle ——furthermore it was likely the audience hall of the devil king castle. High ceiling, various beautiful designs, and furnishings that were created in detail, all those projected the dignity of the devil king across the screen. The image further moved toward the side of the throne.

And then what began to appear was a large cage made from dark gray metal wrapped in shining reddish black magic power. Naturally, something was imprisoned inside it…

"… Fuck"

Dirty word reflexively flew out from Hajime's mouth. At the same time, Yue and others also made an expression that seemed like they were chewing a hundred bitter bugs. The people who were especially greatly shaken were as expected Kouki and others in the group summoned from an alternate world.

"Everyone… sensei-!"

"Even Lily-"

Kaori and Shizuku yelled with tone colored by uneasiness.

Correct, just as the two said, the cage inside the image was imprisoning their classmates, Aiko, and then princess Liliana who were supposed to be in the Hairihi kingdom.

Aiko and Liliana were among the students where most of them were hugging their knees with uneasy expressions. They were desperately nursing several students who were powerlessly lying down. Looking carefully, those collapsed students seemed to be the party member of Nagayama. Other than them, even a member of Ai-chan guard party Tamai Atsushi was also crouching with an expression distorted in pain, although she was not as bad as Nagayama's party.

Hajime immediately took out the 'Compass of Guidance' and searched for Aiko's whereabouts.

"Chih, they are the real thing…"

"Hou, you have a really interesting item huh, young man. For a probing artifact, I'm feeling a really strong power from it. Can you ascertain the whereabouts of your important comrades with that?"

The compass was pointing at a point to the south continent. It showed that Aiko was undoubtedly at the devil king castle of the devil race. Hajime who was convinced that it wasn't a faked image clicked his tongue. Freed who was showing interest at the compass was for the first time since they arrived here was obviously displaying his emotions. In his words, there was a lot of sense of superiority put there.

From Hajime's attitude, Kaori and others also guessed that the image on the screen was the real thing and their expression turned bitter. And then in this kind of time, the first one to howl was Kouki. Kouki raised his voice in rage.

"You coward-! What invitation with you taking our comrades hostage-! Return everyone right now-!"

"Ahahah, as expected from Kouki-kun! You are straightforwardly kind, aren't youuu. You are so serious even for those trashes, I'm falling in love with you all over againnn."

“Eri, don’t screw around. There is nothing for you by doing this kind of thing! Return back everyone, you too also come back to us!”

“Aaahn, you said come back to meee. Are you planning to kill me in agony?”

“Eri-“

“Kufufu, wait a bit –kayy. Sooon, I will make Kouki-kun into only my Kouki-kun, okayyy.”

Kouki’s yell didn’t reach Eri at all. In a glance, it looked like a conversation but it wasn’t one at all. For Eri ‘the Kouki inside Eri’ was something fixed. Only Kouki who was convenient for herself was her Kouki. That distortedness seemed to have become even worse even compared to the betrayal of that day.

Kouki who understood that his words didn’t reach gritted his teeth while his gaze returned at Freed. And then the moment when he was about to argue further…

DOPAN! DOPAN!

“-!?”

A familiar gunshot interrupted him. Two streaks of crimson flashes soared straight at Freed and Eri. The flashes were going to instantly blast a part of Eri’s body and Freed’s skull, however, two Nointo cut in with afterimage left behind them and blocked the bullets with their large swords.

Different from before, a large crack entered the large sword with one attack. If there was one more shot the sword would break, but it didn’t change the fact that the attack was stopped. Hajime who irritatedly scowled was going to pull the triggers further.

“Do.. don’t! Wait! Please, wait, Nagumo-kun…“

The one who hindered that was Suzu. Her small body reached straight at Hajime’s arm in a tackle. Hajime didn’t even twitch with something like Suzu’s weight, but looking at her dangling on his arm with a desperate expression and voice averted Hajime’s attention for a moment.

In that opening, even while trickling with cold sweat, Freed barely kept his expression unchanged with an opened mouth.

“… This madman. Are you not valuing the lives of your comrades?”

“Hah, you forgot already how I blew away your prided comrades before this in the same situation? Obediently following you will only get us all killed anyway. After all, your self-proclaimed god seems to desire to see my painful death, isn’t it?”

“You are saying, that in that case, you will survive just by yourself even by abandoning your comrades?”

“Don’t make me say this repeatedly. Those guys aren’t my comrades or anything. Besides…”

Fearless smile and beastly glaring eyes were directed at Freed. Toward Freed who instinctively took a step back on the back of the white dragon Uranos, Hajime declared as though to say that his words were exactly the common sense of this world…

“Even if I accepted the invitation after slaughtering you all, there won’t be any problem, right?”

Incidentally, if it was an invitation to the devil king castle then they would need one or two presents. Hajime laughed while making a gesture of slitting his neck. Everyone understood that he was saying he was going to bring the heads of Freed and others as the present. Kouki and others made shuddering expression thinking that the way of thinking of this guy was exactly that of a devil king.

Hearing that really arrogant way of talking, also feeling rage toward himself for stepping back even slightly toward such a Hajime, Freed's expression distorted for an instant although he immediately smoothed over his face and lifted the corner of his lips with a scoff.

"How high-spirited. In front of this many apostle-sama I cannot think of you as sane but… on this occasion, how about I put out one more card."

"Aa?"

Giving a glance at the doubtful Hajime, Freed changed the viewpoint of the screen that projected Aiko and others. It seemed that besides the cage imprisoning Aiko and others, there was one more cage. It had the same build, but that cage was quite small-sized was something to imprison one or two people.

And then, the moment the people imprisoned inside there was projected,

————

Sound vanished from the world.

An abnormal killing intent to the degree that made everyone hallucinated like that was covering the whole area in the surrounding.

Those who could recognize that sound vanished were those in the classification as a strong person. After all the killing intent——or possibly it should be called as demonic intent already, against the torrent of that terrifying presence, in order for their instinct as a living thing to preserve their mind, the monsters that were Freed's subordinates immediately had their consciousness shutdown and fainted.

Even Suzu who was clinging to Hajime's arm felt that her consciousness was going far away while flopping down on the ground. She bit hard on her lips and somehow maintained her consciousness with that pain.

"-——-——yo, you bastard, don't you care, about what's going to happen to those fish imitations-"

Freed was putting his awareness at his breathing that felt like it would stop anytime while giving off warnings with a warped expression. He already didn't have any leisure to dress up any calmness.

'Fish imitation'——the two silhouettes that Freed called like that as well as the reason that drastically changed Hajime's presence were… Myuu and Remia.

At the center of the cage, the two were tightly hugging each other to confirm each other's existence. They couldn't hide their uneasy expressions, but even so, they stout-heartedly observed their surroundings without showing a tear.

Hajime had made preparation before they left Erisen so that not even the smallest chance could hurt Myuu and Remia. Artifact to isolate and hide the presences of the two and a detection artifact to warn

Hajime in the case the enemy appeared were left there. Barrier artifacts to buy time were also set at the city of Erisen and Myuu's house. Hajime didn't spend six days there just for show.

But, none of those was effective and Myuu and Remia were kidnapped. The preposterous strength of Hajime's artifacts and his bond with Myuu, without knowing those two things this was something impossible to happen. It was also something that no one would even think to carry out, to begin with.

In other words, there was only one person who could arrive at such idea and kidnapped the two with the perfect setup.

Hajime's gaze slowly flowed at Eri piercingly.

"—-"

A presence that penetratingly invaded until the depth of the mind was crawling all over Eri's skin. Eri's body was shuddering with chills, her body temperature that was rapidly lowering naturally made her breathing disordered.

Afer Hajime pierced such Eri with his gaze for a few moments, his gaze moved quietly as though she was just a stone at the roadside. Immediately, Eri staggered in the air as though she was just released from a binding.

Regardless of being the source of the inhuman demonic intent, as though it was just a lie, Hajime's eyes turned calm and even looked sleepy, that mismatched strange gaze moved at Freed once more. And then, his mouth opened with a calm voice as expected.

"… I'll accept the invitation."

"Wha, what?"

With the demonic intent still gushing out without change, the words that were let out from Hajime's mouth made Freed's expression turn bewildered.

"… I said that I'm accepting the invitation. Lead us on quickly."

"-… Hmph, you should have said that right from the beginning."

At the same time with the repeated words, the demonic intent was gradually settling down. Even while breathing in disarray, Freed made a sneer with an expression that recovered his calmness. Like that he jolted awake the fainted swarm of gray dragons with metamorphosis magic while beginning to chant the spell to open the gate toward the devil king castle.

While giving a glance at Eri besides Freed who was similarly drenched with a large amount of sweat while breathing roughly and Kouki and the others who were released from their stiffened body, Yue tilted her head while looking up at Hajime.

"… Is it fine?"

"… Yeah. If we know the place then we can use crystal keys to connect the space, but the time lag is too long. Besides, the other side should know too that we are in possession of space transfer power."

"Perhaps, they have to make a countermeasure, won't they?"

“It’s troubling that there is a worst case. Unlike sensei-dono and the others, Myuu and Remia art not able to buy the time to compensate for that time lag with their own strength after all.”

Just as Tio said, if they felt like it, they could use a crystal key and the compass and teleport accurately to the devil king castle where Aiko and others were captured.

But, because it was a concept magic there would be a time lag created no matter what until the magic was invoked, for the enemy side who knew that Hajime and compnay possessed space magic, it was unthinkable that they would miss that opening time lag.

Even so, if it was just Aiko and others, they were a cheat group so perhaps they would be able to endure and pull through that time lag using their specs. For that reason, Hajime chose an annihilation battle tactic before, but Myuu and Remia whose fighting strength was nonexistence… in addition, they were courteously entered into another cage, then the story was different.

Thinking about the worst case, Hajime wanted to refrain from the forceful method.

“… Now, I’ll guide you to the location of our lord. Don’t worry, if you don’t make any mistake then surely you will be able to touch those half-assed living things once more. Although it’s hard to understand just what is good for those filthy living things.”

Freed completed the gate and at the other side of the connected space, there were a large terrace and townscape below visible. It appeared that they didn’t teleport directly at the audience hall where Aiko and others were at, the gate was opened at the outside of the upper level of the castle.

Most likely the inside of the castle had a barrier spread to forbid intrusion. Even if it was an ally there was no doubt that they would be unable to directly teleport in. Thinking about the defense of the devil king castle was only a natural measure.

Freed’s expression became disappointed looking at Hajime who proceeded to the gate while ignoring all of Freed’s mocking words, then he seemed to notice something and opened his mouth.

“That’s right. Young man, before moving on let’s have you take off your weapons.”

“…”

Toward Hajime who was merely returning a silent gaze, Freed finally couldn’t hide his joy from standing in a superior position and repeated his words with sneer mixed in them.

“Are you listening? I told you to quickly take off your weapons. Aa, also, let’s have you wear this shackle to seal your magic power.”

The shackle that looked like handcuff was taken out with clinking sound, it greatly resembled the one that was once put on Aiko and Kouki and others. Even though Freed dressed up this as an invitation, yet the treatment was completely like a prisoner.

Perhaps because there was the threat of hostage, Freed sneered understanding that. He had the air like a religious fanatic since before this, but until now he didn’t seem like someone with a petty personality. Perhaps the repeated defeat had distorted his personality. Possibly there was something after the invasion of the royal capital that deepened the degree of his fanaticism and he lost all restraint…

In any case, Hajime's reply was decided.

"I refuse."

"… What did you say?"

"Don't make me say it the second time. I said I refuse."

Those words of Hajime without any enthusiasm made Freed's expression turn taken aback for a moment, but in the next moment, he directed a gaze as though he was looking at something that was hard to understand.

"… Are you unable to understand your position? You all have no right to refuse. If you don't stay quiet and follow what you are told, that ugly mother and daughter——" "Don't get carried away." "-… What did you say?"

The clichéd speech that was threatening to harm Myuu and Remia if Hajime didn't obey was interrupted in the middle and Freed raised his eyes, a calm voice then reached him.

"Do you think if you take Myuu and Remia hostage, then everything of me is sealed? Understand this. The card you used, is a double-edged sword."

"Double-edged sword… you say"

From Hajime, there wasn't any demonic intent or even killing intent like before. Far from that, he didn't even let out a speck of magic power, naturally, he also wasn't using 'Coercion'.

Nevertheless, when they noticed the white dragon Uranos had slightly backed away, even Freed himself who was riding on its back noticed how his hand was trembling in small shivers. Just what in the world… without even any time to question that, Hajime's words were spoken.

As always, it was a calm voice without a drop of anger or hate that could be felt from it, it was like the robotic voice of Nointo, but without regarding ally or enemy the voice was accompanied with reverberation that caused gooseflesh to form on his back.

"The reason that all of you are still alive is also thanks to Myuu and Remia. … Just try putting even a single wound towards the two of them. … Children, woman, old men, noble or the poor, there won't be any distinction, the race called the devil… I'll make them extinct."

"——-"

Freed gulped. Surrounded by hundreds of 'the apostles of true god' at the surrounding, and his lord was a living god, he should have rejected Hajime's words as impossible and merely a nonsense that would bring no problem at all. But, he felt a strange power that was hard to comprehend in that toneless voice and even for just a moment the thinking of 'he might be able to do it' flashed in his mind.

"I don't know what is your objective that you do something like inviting us, but I have no intention to ride into enemy's main base bare handed. After all, like that perhaps everything will be over without us unable to do anything. Rather than falling into a situation like that, rampaging around in sink or swim is still better."

“… You are saying you are abandoning that mother and daughter?”

“I’m not abandoning them. However, I’m only thinking that losing my weapons here will be related to abandoning them.”

A scene that often appeared in the story was one where the main characters had hostages taken and they threw away their weapon just like they were told, but Hajime didn’t choose that. He thought that it was out of the question for the helping side to be made powerless for the sake of temporary safety. Like that would only cause everyone to be done in at the end.

Therefore, in that kind of time, Hajime would choose to annihilate the opponent even if the hostage wouldn’t come out of it with all their limbs intact. As long as the hostage alive then they could be healed. Then the way to kill the opponent with certainty was rational. The intense preparedness that wouldn’t submit to irrationality inside Hajime made him like that.

Of course, that was something awfully misaligned from common sense, in some way that choice could also be called as wrongdoing. After all, the maximum consideration and carefulness were demanded in the liberation of a hostage. Normally, it was unreasonable to think that it would be okay as long as the hostage didn’t die.

Not to mention, if it was about someone that was an extremely important existence for themselves, it was normal for someone to hesitate and throw away their logic and belief.

“… As expected, you are mad.”

Therefore, the feeling that Freed harbored was such a thing. Just when he took the initiative as the attacker and stood in the superior position, the opponent would abandon their base and came attacking instead. Furthermore, the basis of that action was which one would be able to annihilate their opponent first. It was a chicken race like that. Indeed, it couldn’t be helped that Freed doubted Hajime’s sanity.

Although in this case, there was a lot of bluffing factor included inside Hajime’s words. For Hajime, he didn’t think for even a little bit of wishing Myuu to be wounded. If possible, he wanted to take her back unharmed. For that reason, as much as possible he wouldn’t tolerate being separated from his weapons.

Therefore, he caused the opponent to have the impression of ‘I don’t know what he will do if he is poorly cornered too much’ and tried to forcefully keep his card. Hajime had already shown a portion of that impression in front of Freed, so Hajime thought that the possibility he could have his way was high. But for argument’s sake, he was also thinking about what to do in the case that this was no good.

“Then, while that madman is still not lining up a lump of woman and children meat of your fellow race in front of you, quickly take us in front of Myuu’s location.”

“…”

Freed couldn’t answer. He understood that Hajime wouldn’t yield, but to take an enemy in front of his lord while they were still armed was something hard to be pardoned as a pious servant.

Speaking the truth, the devil king Aruv told him to use the hostage to bring them to him, but he didn’t give any instruction to Freed regarding the details like weapons or binding. Aruv wouldn’t mind it even if Hajime was armed.

In other words, the demand for disarmament was Freed's own decision using his common sense, but as expected, honestly nodding at Hajime's demand was a cause for hesitation.

There a Nointo, the 'apostle of the true god' who didn't say a word until now cut in.

"… Freed. Stop this unproductive matter. That person won't mind this kind of triviality. Rather he will even think that this will be good entertainment. Also, as long as we are standing by, there is not even the slightest chance he can do anything. The binding for the irregular is enough with the very existences of us."

"Kuh, however…"

Giving a glance at Freed who was still balking, Nointo faced Hajime with exactly the same voice and expression like when she faced him before.

"My name is called 'Ahat'. Irregular, the analysis of the data of your battle with Nointo is already finished. Don't think that you can win the battle with us for the second time."

'Therefore, if you want to bring a weapon then just bring it', it seemed that she was implicitly telling him that. Looking carefully, the 'apostle of the true god' with the same appearance like Nointo introducing herself as Ahat, her eyes looked slightly shaken. Perhaps it was just his feeling, but to Hajime, it was something that looked like hostility or perhaps hatred.

'Don't think that you can win the battle with us for the second time'——those words weren't something from a simple doll, perhaps it was filled with more intense emotion.

But such thing didn't matter for Hajime. And so, he quietly turned his gaze away and headed toward the gate with cold eyes. It was clear that he was telling them to hurry and guide him.

Freed scowled at that arrogant attitude, but with the addition of the pressing from Ahat, he shook his head in annoyance and slipped through the gate.

Hajime and others followed from behind.

At that time, the only one who noticed Hajime's hand shining for an instance was only Yue who was beside him.

The large terrace that the gate was connected to had the space almost as big as a school rooftop, even with all of them stepping into there was still some space left. Nevertheless, that was also only after the gray dragons and the majority of the apostles flew to the sky.

The gray dragons flew up right after they came out, the apostles also went away somewhere leaving behind only ten of them. The ones remaining surrounded Hajime and others alertly.

At the same time with the gate behind them closing, Freed silently pointed his chin to urge them to follow him. Hajime also followed him silently.

"Kouki-kun, that monster was terrifying you knowww, console meee."

"E, Eri-, you…"

Right after they began to walk, Eri took Kouki's arm and she hugged him while beginning to prattle about such jests. Even though she had betrayed them and now she was taking their classmates hostage again, she didn't look apologetic at all and grinned widely while pressing her body close to Kouki.

She didn't even give attention to Shizuku and the others around her. She also completely ignored Suzu who called her. Shizuku and Ryuutaro were directing gazes overflowing with wariness, but they didn't try to stop her. They judged that right now it was better to not quarrel imprudently.

Eri was glued to Kouki, her mouth approached his ear, her breath was blowing into his ear and she whispered something with a face that looked in heat. Looking at her like that was unbearable but even Kouki was distracted thinking about his classmates and didn't forcibly shake her off.

Like that, they walked through the long corridor made from stone crossing several corners, and then at the place they reached there was a large door filled to the brim with the dignity that was worthy of an entrance that was connected to the audience room of the devil king castle. Perhaps to show the authority, there was a globe that appeared to be symbolizing the sun. A design that depicted several pillars of light pouring down from that sun was engraved there.

Freed sent a sign to the devil race standing in front of the door with his gaze. Thereupon that devil race quietly held his hand to a part of the door. Right after that, a heavy sound reverberated and the door opened to the left and right.

Behind the door, the scenery that Freed displayed using 'Hermit Mirror' spread out, ahead of the red carpet they could see a spot that looked like an altar and an extravagant throne. Just like the image, at the side of the throne, there should be cages set behind the large pillar.

Repressing their hot-blooded hearts, they approached toward the empty throne. And scenery exactly like the image they had seen was there.

It appeared that the figures of Hajime and others were also visible from the other side. The classmates opened their eyes wide, Aiko and Liliana who also noticed the door open gulped loudly in surprise.

Their expression were slightly clouded seeing how Hajime and others were surrounded by apostles, but looking at Hajime, who had a corner of his mouth lift in a smile for the first time since coming here, the two began to get teary eyes from deep emotions. And then, when they were just about to call Hajime's name with a maidenly expression that was obviously filled with special feeling…

"Papaa——!!"

"Dear!!"

The mother and daughter Myuu and Remia preceded them. And then, putting aside Myuu's 'papa', just what was with Remia's 'dear'? Such dangerous gazes from the two which contained that question went back and forth from Remia and Hajime.

Ignoring the two who were unable to know about time and place? Hajime's eyes gently slackened.

"Myuu, Remia. Sorry, you two got dragged into this. Wait there. I'll get you two out immediately."

"Papa… Myuu is fine. I waited believing in papa. That's why, don't lose to the bad people!"

“My my, Myuu… Hajime-san. We are fine so please be careful.”

Even though she was unable to hide her unease, the moment Hajime appeared, Myuu made a full smile and felt relief from the bottom of her heart. Looking at such a Myuu, Remia who was also concerned made an 180 to Hajime’s calm atmosphere.

Freed was about to open his mouth to warn so they didn’t make a racket as they pleased, but just before he could do that a voice resounded from behind the throne.

“No matter what age, it still looks beautiful, the bond between parent and child. I understand because I also have experienced it. Although in my case, it was a relation between a niece and uncle you see.”

The wall behind the throne slid open. From there who came out was a golden haired and crimson eyed good looking man. His age was past middle-aged. He was wearing jet black clothes and mantle with good quality and golden embroidery worked on the sleeves, and his hairstyle was all combed back. Several strands of his blonde hair were dangling forward and the slightly opened shirt on his chest drafting off a strange sex appeal.

Although what he drafted off wasn’t only sex appeal. He also gave off the presence of youthful strength and the weight of a veteran. There was constant charisma in him that attracted those watching him. In all probability, this must be the devil king. And then, this was the guy introducing himself as the god ‘Aruv-sama’.

Hajime wordlessly narrowed his eyes at the devil king that appeared while smiling gently. And then he was about to open his mouth but similar like Freed someone beat him to the punch. However, that wasn’t by the devil king ahead of his gaze, but it was by the shell-shocked voice at his side.

“… Li, es… how can…”

“Yue?”

Yes, not even noticing at Hajime’s call, she was leaking out a hoarse voice as though seeing something impossible with a greatly shaken state, it was Yue. Her eyes were opened wide, piercing straight at the devil king.

Hajime was about to call once more at Yue whose state was obviously abnormal, but then he was attacked by a strange déjà vu. Yue’s golden hair and crimson eyes. Those were…

“Yaa, Aleytia (・・・). It has been a long time, hasn’t it? As always, you are so small and cute.”

The words said to Yue by the devil king that interrupted Hajime’s thought, those were filled with an affection that was really unthinkable for a first meeting. There, Hajime also noticed. The appearance of the devil king, compared to her beloved lover had a similarity somewhere.

Hajime murmured ‘Don’t tell me’ inside his heart. That conjecture which he couldn’t put into words was proved as correct by a word of Yue.

“… Oji-sama…” (TN: Oji=uncle)

Chapter 154 – Is it Lie, Or Truth (Beginning)

“…Oji, sama…”

Yue’s hoarse voice resounded. Her eyes were opened unusually wide, her small and slender hands were shaking in small trembles as though expressing the agitation inside her heart.

Normally it was an impossible situation for her to not notice Hajime’s call to her, it showed just how deeply she was agitated.

Giving a glance at Hajime and the others who were evidently shocked looking at Yue’s condition, the golden-haired red eyed devil king smiled really gently while once more addressing Yue with the unfamiliar name.

“That’s right. It’s me. Aleytia. Looks like you are surprised. …That’s understandable. But, that look of yours is nostalgically lovely. You haven’t changed at all since three hundred years ago.”

A smiling devil king. Yue took a step back, perhaps finally perceiving that the person there was her uncle. And then, just when she was about to say something with her trembling lips, the apostle Acht opened her mouth as though to beat her to the punch.

“Aruv-sama?”

Acht called at the devil king with an expression that was like a mask, however, her intonation was clearly questioning. From that indication, it was as though the devil king’s attitude toward Yue was an unexpected situation for her. And it wasn’t just the apostles, even Freed was similarly making a slightly questioning look.

Hearing that call, the devil king faintly smiled and suddenly he lifted his hand. …Toward Acht and others, the apostles of god.

The next moment, light of magic power that resembled Yue’s exploded like a flashbang grenade, instantly everything was drowned in light. That light then was absorbed back into Denreed’s hand as though in a playback, after that the figures of the apostles crumbling down like a machine that had its electricity cut off became visible.

Furthermore, as though it was an afterthought, Freed and Eri also fell down. Kouki who was beside Eri was dumbfounded by the sudden situation, he was only staring at Eri fixedly without even a twitch.

In front of Yue and others who were dumbfounded by the sudden event, the devil king released a sigh ‘fuu’ as though he had just gone through a really nerve wrecking situation, next he lifted his thrust out hand over his head and snapped his tongue, invoking some kind of technique.

What was reflected in Hajime’s magic eye stone was a golden barrier spreading in a dome shape. However, its purpose seemed as though it had a slightly different effect compared to the normal barrier.

“This is a barrier for deceiving interception and surveillance. It’s something to show different voice and scene that I prepared. With this, the apostles outside this place won’t notice what is happening here.”

“…What are you planning?”

Hajime silently narrowed his eyes at this speech and conduct done by a person who seemed to be hostile toward the apostles while asking back.

“Nagumo Hajime-kun, isn’t it? Your vigilance is reasonable. That’s why let me say this frankly without beating around the bush. I am the current devil king of the devil kingdom Garland, and the prime minister of the former vampire kingdom Avatar——Denreed Gardia Wesperitirio Avatar…a person who rebels against god.”

The words that were said with the majesty as the devil king reverberated inside the wide audience hall dignifiedly. Those words carried the power that made the people in this place hearing them think that they were said seriously.

All the members other than Hajime gulped at the shocking truth. Who would ever think that the king of the devil race that opposed the human race was a rebel against god, such thing was unthinkable even in their dream. Their reaction was only natural.

Among them, Suzu who just managed to return to her senses yelled “Eri-” while trying to dash at her, but she was stopped by Kouki’s hand. His hand touched the nape of the neck of the fainting Eri and he felt her pulse, then he nodded while smiling that there was nothing to worry about. It appeared that Eri only lost her consciousness. Looking at Suzu patting her chest in a relieved sigh, Denreed spoke an apology “Sorry to make you uneasy.”

Incidentally, regarding the apostles, they had their function suspended. Freed and others had their body function suspended——to put it another way, they were in a temporary death state.

In addition, with the ‘devil king’s apology’, among everyone who was lost for words from the sequence of events, Hajime’s gaze was sweeping at his surroundings while he was about to press the question at Denreed about his true intentions. But, at that time a yelling voice suddenly resounded. It was a voice that sounded like it was desperately trying to deny something.

“Lies…there is no way that’s true-. Den-ojisama was a normal vampire! Indeed, he was exceptionally strong, but he wasn’t a true ancestor like me! There is no way that Oji-sama, that Denreed is still alive.”

“Aleytia…. You are shaken, aren’t you? Even so…that’s only natural. Although it was something necessary, I had done something horrible to you. If such a person suddenly appeared in front of your eyes, it would be stranger if you weren’t shaken.”

“Don’t call me Aleytia-! Don’t pretend that you are Oji-sama-!”

Denreed smiled sadly toward Yue who was in an agitated state that even Hajime had never seen. Perhaps getting rubbed the wrong way even by such an attitude, Yue pushed her hand out with seething killing intent. Tremendous magic power was bursting out from her body.

Although she had accepted the possibility of the difference in her memory inside the Ice and Snow Cavern, even so, the man in front of her eyes was the one who had locked her in the depth of darkness for a long three hundred years. It was the person who had betrayed her who had given him immense trust. There was no way she could be so easily convinced.

To say nothing of how that person who should have died to suddenly appear in front of her eyes, talking intimately, affectionately at her with the look that didn’t change at all from three hundred years ago. Her heart was churning like a sea that was hit directly by a typhoon.

Following an impulse that she didn't even understand herself, Yue launched a lightning dragon. Nervousness ran through the other members at the current situation that was moving suddenly.

However, Denreed only kept smiling. With an attitude that could even be said as composed, once more, he snapped his fingers. At that instant, along the edge of the altar where the throne was located, a wall of light rose up. The lightning dragon that was howling thunderously while approaching Denreed crashed onto that barrier, yet it was unable to destroy the very strong barrier.

Inside the surging lightning, Denreed talked with a gentle voice from the other side of the barrier.

"Aleytia Gardea Wesperiterio Avatar. The most beautiful and wise queen in history, my beloved niece. I am certainly your uncle. I wonder if you remember. That I was a powerful monster user."

"What are-"

"If it's the current you then you should understand. Just why the I at that time was that powerful of a monster user."

"…-, an age of god magic…metamorphosis magic."

Denreed smiled saying "Good answer", just like in the past when he watched over Yue's study. Attacked by déjà vu, Yue's expression distorted.

"Exactly. To say further, I also obtained regeneration magic. Though unfortunately, my talent in that area is poor, it's like throwing a pearl before swine. In exchange, I can boast that I am very much talented in metamorphosis magic. I also worked really hard on it. As the result, not only creating monsters, I also became able to perform strengthening on my own body. That's how I extended my life until now."

Actually, Hajime had drawn out his railgun and nonchalantly fired under the cover of the lightning dragon, but understanding that the barrier couldn't be broken through easily, he put his hand on Yue's shoulder. With that lightning dragon that had bad efficiency and convergence rate incomparable from usual due to her disordered mind, it was only a pointless waste of magic power.

Yue suddenly returned to her senses from the warmth on her shoulder, she glared once at Denreed with dangerous eyes then dispersed the lightning dragon. She then recovered her calmness in a few minutes before making her question, even so, she didn't hide how her tone became rougher.

"…That day the devil that uses the white dragon, he said that you are a god with the name Aruv. He said that you had led the devil race for a few hundred years until now!"

At the very least Denreed had worked as the prime minister of the vampire kingdom Avatar for more than twenty odd years until Yue was imprisoned, Yue slapped the contradiction with Freed's statement at Denreed.

Even so, Denreed's composure didn't crumble. As though to say that what Yue pointed out was only natural, he calmly answered.

"What Freed said is not mistaken. I am certainly Aruv, at the same time it can also be said that Aruv is not me."

Yue's gaze became severe hearing Denreed answering with something that sounded like Zen philosophy. Denreed smiled wryly at that while continuing his words.

"The existence called Aruv was the retainer god of god Ehito during the age of god. He is someone like a subordinate. At first, Aruv swore loyalty toward god Ehito and became his hands and feet, yet one day, he held a doubt. Is it fine to keep overlooking the inhuman act of god Ehito like this, he thought. A few hundred years, a few thousand years passed while he was holding that doubt which grew largr and before long he grew to hold the intention of rebellion."

Denreed walked around the throne with steady sounds of footsteps. That calm tone for some reason resounded really well despite its volume that wasn't loud at all, even so it didn't make anyone feel discomfort at all.

"But, there is no way he can match god Ehito who is the chief god. Therefore, Aruv formed a plan. That plan is, he would descend to the surface as Ehito's pawn and intensified the war of the people, and as the situation fell into chaos, he would shoulder the role of devil king——under such pretense, he would then search in the surface for any method and battle strength that could oppose Ehito."

Denreed stopped talking for a moment and opened and closed his hand repeatedly. He was doing that gesture as though to ascertain the sensation while continuing.

"But, a god that doesn't have flesh body, needs a flesh body as a vessel so they can act fully on the surface. Aruv also searched for a person who could become his vessel to reside his soul into that body. Originally, making one's soul reside inside another person's body isn't something easy even for god if the rejection of the body's owner is strong but…if they displayed their existence as god then there won't be anyone rejecting them. After all, it's not like the person's self will disappear, rather it even feels like an honor, right?"

"…Like that, Denreed was also chosen by Aruv?"

"Aruv was mad with joy, you know? If I was merely someone with aptitude, then he would only tell me that he was a retainer god of Ehito, but I knew the truth. I could possibly become a true fellow rebel. Aruv told me his will from inside my body while outside I was under the observation of the apostles. Even now Aruv is inside me, giving me help in various matters. Two souls in one body. That is the meaning of my words that I am Aruv and also not Aruv."

Denreed paused to ascertain whether comprehension had reached Yue and the others while putting his hand on the throne. Seeing that, Yue made a complicated face while asking.

"…Since when?"

"It happened just a little bit before you succeeded the throne. At the same time, even I who was unable to do anything even knowing the truth understood that there was something that I could do. I thought that as my mission."

"…Mission."

"Yes, the mission to overthrow god. Though it was really hard making it so that god Ehito and his apostles wouldn't catch my true intentions, you see. Thanks to that, I was made to do many things that were not my true intention countless times."

Denreed smiled asking if there was anything else she wanted to ask, seeing that smile it woke up the memory of the time when he was in the role as her instructor, shaking Yue's heart. The way he talked and his atmosphere felt like the uncle inside her memory. She began to think that by any chance he might really be alive just like he said.

And then, if that was really the case, there was something that Yue wanted to ask, no, something that Yue had to hear at all cost.

"…Why did you betray our country? Why, I was impri…"

"I'm sorry."

"-…I don't want to hear your apology-! The reason-"

Yue yelled at Denreed who was saying words of apology with a mournful expression. Hajime at her side put strength into the hand he put on her shoulder to calm her down. The other members were also directing serious expressions at Denreed without butting into this matter that was related with Yue's past.

"Aleytia. You were a prodigy, to the degree that no other could possibly catch up to you in the field of magic. Even I who was a user of an age of god magic wasn't a match against you. This strength was too conspicuous. That was why eyes were attracted to you. Just like Nagumo Hajime who is at your side."

"…Irregular."

"That's right. Aleytia, I wonder if you remember? At that time, the upper echelon of Avatar was already in the process of being dyed by the influence of god Ehito's faith. That included both your parents too. You should have felt a glimpse of that."

"…I remember. Oji-sama and Chichi-ue quarreled often regarding my education. …Oji-sama was assigned as my instructor. That was why I was raised without really getting concerned by the faith." (TN: Chichi-ue is father.)

Denreed nodded back toward the nodding Yue.

"That was because I knew the truth. I didn't have any method to ascertain whether the liberators' words were truth or not, but I thought that it was dangerous for you who was still young to put your faith unconditionally. I wanted to protect you. But, my effort to distance you from the faith became in vain."

"…A pawn that didn't move as wished for was a hindrance?"

"Something like that. The plan to assassinate you became fully all-out. Your immortality isn't absolute. Especially if the enemy is a god then that's even truer…even after I obtained the age of god magic, I didn't have the confidence to protect you from god's intention. Besides, I who had Aruv residing inside my body and awoke to my mission didn't want to lose you who are a trump card. That was why, before the assassination was carried out, I arranged your death and hid you. Until the time when the beacon of the rebellion can be raised."

"…"

Her uncle didn't betray her. Rather he was trying to protect her. Even if he had a feeling that considered her as battle strength, his words contained the feeling that he didn't want to let her die, which matched with a portion of Yue's memory.

Right now, Yue's expression looked anxious as though her unmanageable emotion that was too much for her had lost its place to go, as though she was a lost child.

Her powerless trembling voice that displayed her unstable feelings threw the last question.

"…The hostage? If you are really Denreed-ojisama then…if you say that you didn't betray me, then why?"

Toward those words mixed with criticism inside from Yue who was casting her eyes downward, Denreed smiled wryly while murmuring "About that". And then he snapped his fingers once more. Instantly the radiance covering the cages silently dimmed and vanished, the lock of the cages also clicked open.

The captured classmates, Myuu, and Remia stared at the unlocked door with bewilderment.

"I thought that if I didn't do this then I wouldn't even be able to meet you. Besides, I also had the objective of guarding them for the sake of when the times come. I want you to forgive me about their wounds. The one who went to pick them up were the apostles. I couldn't treat their wounds in front of them. Just in case I commanded them to not kill anyone. After all, perhaps they might become allies from here on together with Aleytia."

"…Com, rade?"

It seemed that according to Denreed it was that kind of reason. Perhaps she had used up everything that she could use to argue, that Yue only repeated Denreed's words with doubt. Her voice already had no heat in it, furthermore her raging heart became even stormier. Because she was given a large amount of information all at once, and how all that information was something important and impossible to ignore for her, she was unable to sort her feelings.

Even Shia and others who were watching over Yue couldn't hide their bewilderment of what to do. The people imprisoned inside the cages were unable to move feeling the atmosphere of the place.

Inside such an atmosphere, Denreed watched fondly as though he had seen through Yue's heart, he descended from the altar while making a smile. The destination where he was walking calmly was Yue's location.

"Aleytia. I want you to believe me somehow. I love you, whether right now or in the past. Just how impatiently I have been waiting for this day when I can see you again. During these three hundred years, there wasn't a day that I had forgotten you."

"…Oji, sama…"

"That's right. I am your Den-ojisama. My cute Aleytia. The time has come. Please, lend me your strength, in order to finish everything."

"…Lend, my strength?"

“Let’s defeat the god together. Just like when we fought the country’s external enemy together back to back. God Ehito is already going to end this era. Actually I planned to hide you until the time when we really have to fight but…this is a windfall. You have become far stronger compared to the past, and then there are even this many users of age of god magic gathered here. Surely we can even reach god Ehito.”

“…I, I am…”

Denreed’s words shook Yue. Denreed was spreading open his arms, as though he was going to embrace Yue who was like that.

That posture resurrected a memory of her childhood at the back of her mind once more. When the young Yue achieved some kind of result in magic training or class, ‘Den-ojisama’ would smile looking even happier than Yue who made the accomplishment while he would surely spread open his arms to welcome her. And then, he would praise Yue who jumped at him saying “You worked really hard” while stroking her head.

The hug of her important relative who was alive, and who didn’t betray her. She loved him dearly like a father, even more than her real father. Yue’s eyes wavered.

Denreed’s smile was increasingly deepening, he was about to say some words in order to embrace Yue.

“Now, let’s go together. Aleyti——”

Instantly,

DOPAN-!

Such familiar dry sound reverberated. At the same time, Denreed’s body snapped back facing up, and then he collapsed behind just like that.

No one was able to grasp what just happened, they were staring at the collapsed Denreed with their pupils turning into dot. His body didn’t even twitch. The vast audience hall was filled with silence.

Inside such an atmosphere, a ‘click’ sound that was like a cocked firing hammer, no, it was exactly the sound of firing hammer being cocked broke the silence. The people in that place twitched with trembling body and sent their gaze at the sound’s source all at once.

There a scene that they half-expected unfolded.

Namely…

“Move out of the way. I’ll make that guy into mincemeat.”

Holding Donner that had white smoke rising up from it, while spouting abusive line like a hoodlum, the figure of Hajime who had vein pulsing on his forehead was there.

Chapter 155 – Is it Lie, Or Truth (End)

“Move out of the way. I’ll make that guy into mincemeat.”

From Hajime's voice anyone could understand that he was extremely displeased. But, at the same time, the gun trigger was pulled again, and a bursting roar echoed. Four streaks of crimson flash took flight, shooting through the four limbs of the collapsed Denreed. Denreed's body twitched a few times.

Hajime took out a Bola from the 'Treasure Warehouse' and threw it at Denreed while at the same time he took out Orkan and pulled the trigger toward the collapsed apostles.

pshu pshu pshu, consecutive shooting sounds reverberated and several streaks of something left fire trail through the air.

After a beat, grand explosions and shockwaves were created. The swarm of missiles that displayed such tremendous might blew away the apostles. Here and there the apostles burst open like broken dolls. Hajime stored Orkan inside the 'Treasure Warehouse' and further aimed the muzzles of Donner and Schlag at Freed and Eri who collapsed in a false death.

There, the surrounding finally returned to their senses.

The first one who raised a strange voice that resembled a scream was Suzu. "UWAaAAH!!" While raising such a desperate or panicked scream, she leapt at Hajime's arm and dangled there. If she didn't do that, she thought that Eri would be turned into small pieces. Her teary eyes that were looking up at Hajime were desperately pleading "Remember your promiseee~!!"

Next, Shia yelled "Stop desuuuu!" while leaping at the opposite arm that Suzu held.

"Ha ha ha ha ha ha, Hajime-san!? What are you doing-! That's Yue-san's uncle you know!?"

"Tha, that's right! The logic is just too nonexistent here! Aa, his head was completely shottt. Qu, quickly use regeneration magic…"

"Ka, Kaoriii, hurryyy! Super hurryyyy! No matter how I see it this is at instant death level but, if it's you then perhaps he can make it somehow!"

"Na, Nagumo. I already thought since a while ago that someday you are really gonna commit a crime like this…"

Starting from Shia, Kaori and Shizuku also started making an uproar, Ryuutaro was getting cold sweats while saying something rude. Tio at first was making a dumbfounded expression before she put her hand on her chin looking as though she was pondering something. Usually, at this kind of time, it would be Kouki who butt in at the very front, but that Kouki was standing in front of Eri. It seemed that he cut in there the moment Hajime aimed his gun.

And then, Yue whose uncle was shot to death by her lover right in front of her eyes,

"… Haji, me?"

Her eyes opened wide while she looked up at Hajime beside her in a daze.

Hajime glanced at such a Yue and then he separated Shia and Suzu who were clinging on his arms, he then stopped Kaori who was about to rush at Denreed's position to revive and heal him.

And then with really frightful naturalness, to the degree that there was no time for anyone to stop him, quickly, without even looking he shot Freed using Donner and threw a bola at Eri. Looking at Freed whose head had a hole put on it and Eri whose body was wrapped all over, Suzu raised “hih” a short shriek and Ryuutaro leaked out “Uwaa” in a cramped voice.

As expected, without even giving a glance at those two, the expression of Hajime’s eyes warped with an irritated look. Even so, without any carelessness he kept the aim of his guns at Denreed and the apostles who were still collapsed as he opened his mouth.

“I thought that I would keep quiet until Yue put an end to it by herself, but no matter what Yue is just too shaken and it looked like she was going to accept that bullshit. So, I forcefully ended it myself.”

“… Bullshit? What do you mean?”

Yue’s eyes were wandering in perplexity by the shocking fact that her important relative might be shot to death by her beloved lover. Looking at such a Yue, Hajime was slightly regretting that he wasted no time to kill the guy, since in the end she got this shaken and he had to explain.

“No, no matter how you look at it, wasn’t it just an explanation that is full of holes. Even Yue, if you are just slightly calmer then surely you will notice, but… well, someone with the same appearance with your relative suddenly made an entrance so perhaps it couldn’t be helped, huh.”

Saying that, what Hajime pointed out was that even though there was a necessity to hide Yue’s existence, if Denreed was alive all this time then he should have been able to come to meet Yue. If she was his beloved niece, then there was no way he would abandonden Yue alone for three hundred years in the darkness.

Also, the sealing method performed on Yue, no matter how one thought about it, it was obviously done by taking into consideration the aftermath of the caster’s death. So, that even if the caster wasn’t there anymore, Yue’s presence wouldn’t be detected by any means. Also with the caster’s death, the secret would never be revealed. Such intention was transparently obvious in the method of Yue’s imprisonment. If it was actually a method taken by a person who was still alive, at the very least there was no affection at all that could be felt from that.

Also, if Denreed made an excuse that he was gathering battle strength, then it was unnatural that the story of the liberators was not out in the open. Even if Aruv himself didn’t know, at the very least Denreed should have a very thorough knowledge about the Ice and Snow Cavern and the Orkus Great Labyrinth. If the story of the liberators was actually known then it was unnatural that there was no other user of age of god magic other than Freed.

In other words, no matter how they looked at it, there was really no sign of Denreed gathering battle strength for when the time came.

There were parts from the fragments of Yue’s memory and Denreed’s old story that were consistent with each other so in a glance, indeed, it looked like this person was Denreed himself. However, Hajime and company had thoroughly confronted existences that looked like them possessing their memory before coming here, therefore just having the memory wasn’t a proof that he was the real person.

However, even though this devil king wasn't Denreed himself, it appeared that he had already inherited his memory/ Yet for these three hundred years, he didn't come to the abyss to apprehend Yue who was an existence with a strength that attracted the notice of god, that was something questionable.

Because of that, Hajime didn't make any intrusion waiting until Yue came to the understanding herself. Instead, he considered other objectives like whether the words of the devil king was the truth, or whether this person was really Denreed that was Yue's uncle. He was focusing all his attentions to search for definitive proof.

The way Hajime looked for proof was to use his magic eye stone to confirm whether Denreed's soul really resided inside that flesh. Using sublimation magic he was able to infuse even more ability into the eye, and making use of the soul magic Hajime inserted into the magic stone eye the addition of an ability that could look at the opponent's soul.

The result, Hajime's magic eye could see nothing except one dirty soul. It was like the soul was a spider that had laid out its web-invading through the flesh. Normally a soul should be in a harmonious state as though it was blending in, shining brilliantly at the center of the body.

For that reason, Hajime was convinced that putting aside the body, there was no way the inside was Denreed himself. Aiming for the moment when the impostor got out of the range of the powerful barrier artifact in the altar, he commenced a preemptive strike at the unknown who had pretended to be Yue's important uncle.

Also, more than that, this person's inside was fake, the impostor's story about sealing the apostles lacked credibility, so he also prepared a preemptive attack at the apostles.

Of course, this was a story where god was involved, so the chance that Denreed's soul was sealed somewhere wasn't zero. But, even in that case, Hajime could just search the memory of this person who assumed the name of Denreed and ascertain the existence of that possibility. Even flesh damage could be easily dealt with using regeneration magic. In other words, he could just further search for the truth from what this person said after beating him up.

Hearing Hajime explaining the above matters in a shortened summary made all the members there flabbergasted. Their head didn't work that far from the development that was like a raging wave, but now that Hajime said all that, contradictions and unnatural points other than what Hajime pointed came out in droves.

It was as though, by bulldozing through using facts that were too powerful in impact like the matter about Yue's relative, devil king, the rebel against god, this person only focused on temporarily winning over Yue and nothing else mattered…

Hajime was talking about his conclusion to all the members who were beginning to make comprehending faces while watching the surrounding alertly.

"And so, there is no reason to believe this bastard's words, not even a speck of it. And most of all…"

And then, Hajime cut off his words for a moment before he continued with words (real intention) that had unsettled irritation oozing out.

“What the hell with that ‘My cute Aleytia’ huuh, asshole! This girl is ‘my cute Yue’! Besides, Aleytia, Aleytia, how dare you keep calling her like that, you fuckers. Saying ‘let’s go together’ trying to hug her in the confusion, just who give you that permission? Haaa? You think I’m gonna let you take her as you pleased. I’m gonna tear off all your limbs and sink you in a cesspool, shitheadd!!”

“So it’s merely jealousy huh (desu-)!” X3

In short, that was how it was. Ninety percent of this was jealousy. While flashing his gun with vein pulsing on his forehead, Hajime’s speech and attitude that glared while spouting abuse at the body was perfectly a hoodlum.

If this was a meeting with Yue’s true uncle, even Hajime would surely straighten up his clothes and posture before seriously greeting with “Nice to meet you, I am his lover Hajime. I come today to receive your daughter. Any objection won’t be recognized.” (TN: Hajime even use polite language here using desu or masu.)

But even though he was obviously an impostor, he thoroughly shook up Yue. Furthermore, he called her with an old name while acting so familiarly, and in the end, he tried to embrace her. For Yue to be embraced by another man, putting aside that the inside was a stranger (probably), right in front of his eyes… that was something that was worth a ten thousand death, in Hajime’s mind.

Looking at such a Hajime who was drafting off that much dangerous love in a certain meaning, Yue’s heart that kept getting shaken since they entered the audience hall settled with a snap. As though to show that her wandering eyes also snapped in place, she was staring wholeheartedly as though she could see nothing except Hajime right now. Her cheeks were gradually colored with a dreamy rose color, her eyes that were dry like the desert began to moisten damply.

“… Hajime is jealous. Jealous for me… nn. I’m happy.”

Inside her woman heart, Yue was flattered by Hajime’s condition who was fully exposing his jealousy. Even so, she was also scolding herself.

Although there were so many shocking things happening, she still had exposed such unsightliness. To say nothing of how she was accepting someone while unclear whether it was really her uncle or not. She believed the unnatural story she was told without a doubt. Not only that, she was also going to accept the invitation to fight a god, even though that was a preposterous decision that forgot her promise with Hajime.

Indeed, her memory of Denreed was hard to forget, that memory of betrayal was traumatic for her. But right now, there were a lot of happy memories filling her chest that far surpassed all of those memories. It was only a short period of a few months, but the density of those memories easily exceeded the months and years she spent in her motherland. It was to the degree that even if this person was really her uncle, it was impossible for her to take his hand.

While she was talking with this imposter who wears the skin of Denreed, the warmth of Hajime’s hand that was put on her shoulder to support her, she should have been more aware of that.

Yue silently rubbed her forehead on Hajime’s arm while talking with a sweetly damp voice.

“… Hajime, I showed you my ugly side. I’m sorry. I’m fine already now.”

“There is no need to apologize. After all, I know really well just how deep what happened before Yue was imprisoned in the abyss took root inside you.”

“… Hajime. I love you. I love you so much.”

Just like their promise to protect each other, at this time where the greatest demon for Yue was standing in her way, Hajime supported her like a large tree. Toward such a Hajime, Yue spilled her feeling along with a sigh of feverish breath.

But, at that timing, *clap clap* applause sounds resounded.

“Oh man, really, I thought that even if there is some unnaturalness, but if it’s someone with the same appearance as the father of the lover you are doting on, you are going to falter a little. Who would ever think you were going to attack suddenly because of that kind of reason… It seems I misread how diminutive a human is.”

Different from just now not only there was no warmth that could be felt at all, rather contempt and scorn filled the voice that was saying such things. While saying that, Denreed, despite the fact his head and four limbs were drilled by bullets and wrapped in bola that bound him in many layers, was standing up.

The clothes of the devil king wrapping that body had no disarray to them, to the degree that it made anyone doubtful whether he really was shot. If there was no wreckage of the bola under his feet, then everyone would doubt that they were daydreaming.

“Even though I almost managed to cause her mind to lean on this side after much work. Now we have to move on to the plan B… like this I cannot save my face toward that honored person.”

“… You are not Oji-sama.”

“Hmph, I really am that Oji-sama of yours. However, perhaps I should say that it is this flesh that is your uncle.”

“… Are you saying that you usurped that body?”

Yue floated an azure flame on her right hand while questioning the imposter. With that figure, Denreed’s mouth split open widely in a grin.

“You really have bad hearing. I want you to call it an effective recycling. This retainer god of Ehito-sama, Aruv, used this body even after the owner’s death. This person has chosen you to know? Just how honored and deeply moved this body is, don’t you think? Good grief, even this man too, before he died he erased the memory of when he hid you and also the memory of the age of god magic so that I can only use his flesh, what a useless man. If I knew that you were still alive, then I would have dragged it out of this man, by all means necessary.”

“… You killed Oji-sama?”

“Fufu, I wonder about that?”

“… Answer.”

Killing intent surged out from Yue. Her crimson eyes shined fierily, the azure flame on her hand increased in radiance. That blue flame was the 'Flame of Divine Punishment'. It was something brutal that could even burn to nothing only the selected soul. That threat should be noticed by the very soul of the target itself.

But, the opponent Denreed——no, the evil god wearing his skin, he was only showing an arrogant smile as though he wasn't feeling threatened at all.

"Hou, is that really fine? Perhaps my words just now lay, and actually, Denreed is still alive you know? What if he is hidden at the deepest bottom of this body?"

"-…"

Yue's breath unintentionally hitched. Surely even while glaring she was about to launch the flame questioning whether she was just being deceived. But, the next words stopped her hand completely.

"Kukuh, you are making a nice face. In deference to that funny expression, let me teach you one thing. … It's the words of Denreed just before he died. His last words that were addressed to you."

"… Uncle's…"

Hajime aimed his gun muzzle at Aruv as a threat so that he wouldn't get carried away saying words to torment Yue continuously, but just like how Yue stopped her hand, Hajime's movement also completely stopped.

However, later on, Hajime regretted this choice. He was only thinking about Yue that his reaction toward the enemy dulled. Even if it didn't match Yue's wish, he should have decided that there was no need to hear whatever the enemy was saying.

Aruv showed a disgusting smile while putting on airs grandeously, then he opened his mouth.

"You see, Denreed whispered your name while saying this."

——It's better if you die painfully.

"…"

The arrow of words pierced Yue's chest. Even without any magic or anything that disordered the mind, she couldn't help but feel a sharp pain.

At that moment, everything happened at the same time.

"UoOOOOOOH!!"

——Behind Hajime and others who confronted Aruv, Kouki who was beside Eri roared while slashing at Hajime(・・・).

"-"

——Silver light poured down from above. The Beautiful square light that penetrated the ceiling fell straight toward Yue(・・) from overhead.

"——'Degenerate Consciousnessss'"

—— From the other direction of the body of the collapsed Eri, Eri's(・・) dark magic was fired toward Yue who was attacked by that light. Looking at that direction, from a space where there was nothing, an unharmed Eri that looked completely the same like the collapsed Eri came out as though oozing from the air. And then, a flickering darkness ball appeared advancing right before Yue's eyes.

"——'Quake Sky'!"

——Similar to Eri, Freed appeared as expected from a ripped space that was in a different spot from his pulverized body, he had already finished his chanting and fired space blasting magic toward Myuu and Remia.

"This is payback. Irregular."

——At the same time with Aruv's finger snap, a gigantic magic bullet flew at Hajime.

"Exterminate."

——An empty air where there was nothing undulated, and several dozen apostles seeped out from there, they went to attack Hajime and others all at once.

It was a perfect simultaneous surprise attack where they all must have been waiting for this timing. The remain of Freed that had its head drilled and Eri whose body was bound crumbled with rustling sound into atoms as though to say that their role was over.

It appeared that at that instant when their field of vision was blinded by the light, both Eri and Freed were replaced with some kind of artifact. It was something abnormal to be able to deceive even Hajime's magic eye.

Even though Hajime made a bitter expression from getting done in like this, he immediately activated 'Light Speed' and stretched an instant into several dozen seconds. Inside the gray world where the flow of time slowed, the great number of attacks slowly approached.

He could hear the roaring holy sword behind him. Light pillar was falling from above Yue and in front of her flickering black sphere was coming with eerie pulsing. From the front gray magic bullets were approaching while tracing a spiral. Invisible shockwave was running toward Myuu and Remia, and the apostles were assaulting Aiko and others with their large sword raised.

If he left them alone, the only future waiting was the word tragedy.

However, with Hajime alone, there wasn't enough hands. Hajime reflexively gritted his teeth, but suddenly a gaze stabbed him from the side… when he looked by moving only his eyes, the figure of Yue staring at him strongly was there. Just from that, Hajime realized Yue's thought. Namely, the will that told him 'protect Myuu and Remia'.

That pillar of light, the most abnormal phenomenon in this current situation was aiming at Yue, on top of that even that acting of Aruv, and just as he said, even this simultaneous surprise attacks that he said as the plan B made Hajime sensed that all of these were some kind of plan toward Yue, causing him to feel a slight mental resistance toward leaving Yue's side.

But, even so, the gaze she directed at him was the proof of her trust to her beloved lover. Then, there was no way he could betray that. Therefore, he decided.

In this moment, less than a second.

GOGAN-!! Terrific shockwave sound resounded while Hajime fired a shotgun from the elbow of his artificial arm. Kouki who approached from behind was counterattacked by countless pebbles and shockwave and his breath got blown away.

Without stopping, Hajime used the momentum from the shot recoil and pulverized the ground with his step, his figure blurred. He rushed with speed that didn't even leave afterimage while avoiding the approaching magic bullet, his figure then appeared in front of Myuu and Remia. Perhaps from Myuu and Remia's point of view, Hajime looked like he had teleported instantly.

The shockwave of the space blasting that had approached until less than a meter was blocked by the large shield that Hajime took out while he was moving. The improved large shield reacted at the shockwave by releasing its own shockwave like an explosive reactive armor. With that, although cracks entered the surface of the shield, it managed to perfectly defended against the shockwave of the 'Quake Sky'.

As the compensation of Hajime prioritizing Myuu and Remia, the magic bullet Aruv fired attacked Shia and the others who were at Hajime's surrounding. Furthermore, just before the bullet hit, as though it was avoiding Yue, the bullet ruptured and scattered to the surrounding to make everyone lose all places to escape.

"-'Drawn Sky'!"

The reaction speed of the speed fighter Shizuku forcefully changed the target of the magic bullet to herself just before it could hit all her other comrades. As the result, Shizuku's body that received the whole magic bullet of the devil king, although it wasn't a direct attack because she drew the bullet using her black katana, but she received an outrageous impact and got blown far away.

"I won't let you!"

Ignoring all of those, Shia used bombing mode Doryukken to aim between the apostles and Aiko and the others, she pulled the trigger instantly. The fired bursting slug pierced the ground in front of Aiko and others, scattering shockwave along with the light blue ripple.

"KyAAAAAH"

"UWAAAAA"

Shia's aim was to buy time. She didn't think that she could stop several apostles at the same time, so she blew away Aiko's group and the apostles to try to put distance between both sides for the time being. Her intention succeeded, Aiko and others were barely able to escape the large swords of the apostles even while they were shaken by the impact.

Shia and Kaori who had come back to their senses were about to head toward the apostles who gathered themselves. At the same time, Tio pushed out both her hands as though to say that she wouldn't let them do as they pleased more than this. She was about to release her breath attack. Her target was the devil king and the totally unharmed Freed who appeared from the distorted space just like the apostles.

But, the only one who actually managed to act was Shia.

“HAAAAAAH!”

“Ko, Kouki-kun!?”

Kouki who was supposedly blown away by Hajime had come back unnoticed and slashed at Kaori.

“——’Degenerate Consciousness’”

“-, a?”

And Tio was dazed for a slight moment at the same time with Eri’s chanting.

Toward Tio who exposed a glaring opening even for just a few moments, a flying kick that was unthinkable from Eri’s amateur burst caused Tio to be blown far away like Shizuku. As for Kaori, she blocked the holy sword’s attack with her large sword while locking sword with an unbelieving expression.

All of this happening until now happened within only a moment.

Like that, Hajime aimed the muzzles of Donner & Schlag at Aruv and Freed and he was about to pull the triggers. Shia confronted the apostles with her back covering Aiko and the others. Tio and Shizuku were standing up while enduring the pain. Kaori was opening her mouth to look for explanation from Kouki. Ryuutaro and Suzu finally returned to their senses, and at that time…

“Uh, a?”

A small whisper echoed, Yue’s figure was swallowed by the pillar of light.

Chapter 156 – What was Lost

“Yue-!”

“Yue-san!”

Hajime and Shia reflexively yelled with voices driven by unease. The unknown light pillar that was obviously aiming at Yue swallowed her, giving them nothing but a bad premonition. There was no way they wouldn’t become uneasy.

Yue whose body was stiffened finally moved as though she was released from a binding inside the half-transparent pillar shining brilliantly.

As a matter of fact, Yue had received a binding for an instant. The cause was the darkly flickering sphere fired by Eri——the Degenerate Consciousness. It was a magic of dark element, it would blow away the target’s consciousness just for a few moments, it also had the other use to obstruct commands dispatched from the brain, even though it worked only for the moment it would take to blink.

This time it was used in that second way. In addition, the nature of Eri’s vocation as Necromancer came from the dark element, and with her strengthened body, her specs were explosively raised. Due to all those, this magic was strengthened to incomparable power compared to before.

Because of this, Yue's body was momentarily restricted because her body's nerve transmission was blocked, she was late in taking evasive action and also prevented from using magic.

Yue's hand touched the boundary of the light pillar in order to escape. But what came back was a hard sensation. From what she felt, it didn't seem like it would simply harm her. Yue who comprehended that she was captured invoked space magic and attempted to split the light pillar altogether with the space.

"-"

However, surprisingly the space splitting that she certainly had invoked exerted its effect everywhere but the boundary of the light pillar. It was unable to even scratch the pillar. Far from scratching, the pouring down light increased in radiance glaringly, causing its gravity and eeriness to grow.

Yue gave up breaking the light pillar and tried opening a gate. But it seemed the light pillar didn't allow even that. Ahead of Yue's slightly impatient gaze was a distorted space that immediately returned back to before as though nothing had happened.

"Chih. Myuu, Remia, don't move from here."

"Yes, nano!" (TN: Myuu got something like a catchphrase that made her sound cuter.)

"Dear…"

Hajime who sensed Yue's distress laid out a barrier around Myuu and Remia using his crossbits and then rushed to break the light pillar.

"Fufu, you think I'll let you?"

Aruv saw Hajime's grave expression and his expression distorted in joy while his finger snapped. At that moment, a great number of monsters and apostles, as well as those from the devil race and human race appeared inside the audience hall. The same as how the apostles appeared just now, they oozed out from distorted space.

The people from the human race all had blank eyes without exception, but the pressure released from their bodies wasn't inferior to that of a monster. Most likely they were Eri's puppet soldier——furthermore they had been strengthened considerably.

The apostles flew all at once toward Hajime who was heading towards Yue's distress.

"You all are in the way, you puppets-!"

With an angry roar, crimson magic power surged out from Hajime. It was his 'Limit Break'. Furthermore, his fighting style had been polished to a level incomparable from before when he fought Neunte, and his railguns that had their spec rapidly increased using sublimation magic accurately drilled through the apostles. (TN: The use of the name Nointo before this is mistaken, it should be Neunte which mean nine in German)

The one who analyzed their opponent wasn't just the apostles. Hajime also had never slackened in his diligent study even for one day. He had done image training anti-apostle battles many times and increased his ability to this day.

Even so, his opponent were apostles. Possessing deviating spec, they were genuinely the soldier of god. They wouldn't get broken through that easily. Also, by using the advantage of number, they didn't let Hajime approach Yue.

The other members were also in the same situation.

Shia had her hand full from protecting Aiko and the others. Tio, Shizuku, Ryuutaro, and Suzu were also surrounded by apostles, monsters, and puppet soldiers and it was everything they could do just to protect themselves.

"-, Kouki-kun, return to your senses! 'Omni Sky'!"

And then even Kaori who was attacked by Kouki was handling the attacking apostles at the same time while attempting abnormal status recovery magic after judging that Kouki was under the effect of some kind of magic, but…

GIIIIN!!

What she got was an attack from his holy sword. The two of them entered a sword locking contest once more. Kaori raised an agitated voice.

"Why-!"

"The one who needs to return to their senses is you, Kaori. How long are you going to continue something like this?"

"What are you saying-"

"You listened to Denreed-san's story right? Even though he is trying to save this world, but Nagumo, against such a splendid person he…it's unforgivable."

Kaori made a bewildered expression hearing Kouki who was prattling on incomprehensibly. And then her eyes suddenly met the eyes of Eri who currently was in the middle, repugnantly but accurately interfering with Shizuku and her group's consciousness using dark element magic to disrupt them with their battle. Instantly, Eri grinned with an evil smirk.

"-, Eri, you-"

"Kufufu, that's not it, you knowww, I was only guiding Kouki-kun's consciousness for juu-st a little. I was just planting a convenient story inside Kouki-kun, you knoow? The rest is just Kouki-kun believing it by himself, seee"

It seemed that Kouki was brainwashed to believe only the bullshit first part of Denreed's story. His originally strong prejudice and bad habit of convenient interpretation, and then all the burdens that repeatedly weighed his mind until now allowed Eri to easily brainwash him.

"You are saying you didn't make him into a 'puppet'-"

Kaori was harboring doubt seeing Kouki who appeared to not listen at all to the conversation between her and Eri, and also at how he was only targeting her. She then threw her question at Eri of why she didn't she kill Kouki at this chance and use her 'Bind Soul' on him, which was her earnest desire.

Toward that Eri's reply was…

"I'm doing it, you knoow?"

"Eh?"

Kaori leaked out a befuddled voice from lack of understanding what Eri meant. She then received a fierce attack from the apostles that aimed at the opening she unconsciously created. Although Kaori somehow evaded and parried and avoided a lethal wound, several scratches were left on her body. She instantly healed those while directing a questioning look at Eri.

Eri cackled while answering, looking like she was enjoying that state of Kaori from the bottom of her heart.

"Even I wasn't just playing around, you knoow? I didn't shirk working hard in order to obtain an even better Kouki-kun and become a 'fine woman' seeee"

"That-, what do you-"

"You see, I had improved 'Bind Soul' so that it not only manipulated residual thoughts of the dead, now it can even directly affect the thought of the living person you knoow! So to speak, it's something like making a living spirit into your underling. While the person is still living, he will become my subordinate without feeling anything is out of placee! I guide Kouki-kun's consciousnesss, plant what is righteousness mean for Kouki-kunn, and then inside his mind I become a pure heroine that will give him supportt!"

Hearing Eri's talk, a shudder ran through Kaori's expression. Since they arrived at the devil king castle, Eri was excessively clinging at Kouki closely, most likely that was for the sake of putting on this evolved 'Bind Soul' in him. What should be feared from this was the chanting of this spell using methods that didn't sound like a chanting. Words that were easy to understand for the target became a chanting that bound the will just like that.

Furthermore, after the guiding was finished, even when the magic wasn't used anymore the effect didn't cut off. After all, the person himself was under the impression that he thought and decided by himself. And the more time passed, it would become a truth for that person. It was a technique with extraordinary effect for a human like Kouki.

The reality was, the current Kouki was seeing Eri and Denreed's group as exactly the people who were running about in order to save the world like an ally of justice. Hajime who hindered that was the bad one, and the people who followed such a Hajime were all brainwashed victims.

He was aiming at only Kaori surely because Eri was telling him to do that. Eri who would hate it if Kaori rampaged with the strength of the apostles guessed that if it was Kaori then she wouldn't immediately kill Kouki with no questions asked. She then instructed Kouki to cooperate with the apostles to check Kaori in place. Kouki decided in his subconscious that it was the 'right' decision. No matter what kind of logic was attached to it.

In other words, Kouki was completely turned into Eri's puppet soldier even while he was still alive. The thinking that a person wouldn't fall into Eri's technique as long as they weren't killed was a naïve one. It seemed that Kouki had already fallen into Eri's hand.

From here on, no matter what kind of truth and words anyone lined up, Kouki would surely be easily manipulated just by a single devilish sweet word of Eri. Furthermore, Kouki believed that as 'something right' that he decided by himself, so there was no decrease in his fighting ability. Ironically, the weak point of Kouki that Hajime pointed out——his hesitation that would appear at the last moment due to his weak will was now completely gone.

While Kaori was racking her brain facing such a Kouki and the apostles, the other members were also falling into a considerable predicament.

Inside such a situation, the one who by his lonesome was blowing away several dozen apostles leaving them without all their limbs intact, scattering the entrails of the monsters, and turned the puppet soldiers into smithereens while steadily advancing forward was Hajime.

Right now even in this moment he was in the process of predicting the coordination of the apostles, analyzing the weak point of the new type monsters, and comprehending the movement pattern of the puppet soldiers.

"-, stop right there-. Irregular!"

One apostle crossed her twin large swords while rapidly approaching with multiple afterimages created behind her. Even though Hajime and the apostle were previously equal, now he was being engaged by multiple apostles at the same time, yet they were the side that got blown away one-sidedly. Although only a few apostles ceased to function completely from that, most got away with only injury. Coupled with how his advance was unstoppable, those facts made the apostle's voice grow rough unconsciously.

And then an apostle circled to Hajime's side to tyrannically strike the large sword. Still, with her voice sounding rough…

"Out of my way-"

Hajime's artificial arm reached as though he had already understood from the beginning that she would materialize here, catching her face in an eagle grip. The apostle reflexively gulped. With an angry voice along with 'Strong Arm', Hajime threw her to the front.

While he was at it, the moment his hand released her, he didn't forget to fire a bullet from his palm and pulverized her head. The beautifully arranged face was half blown away and the apostle glided on the air like a cannonball, hitting the avalanche of approaching apostles and monsters.

A momentary path was created forcefully, which Hajime broke through while leaving behind an afterimage.

"-aAAAAAAAAAH!!"

The roaring Hajime was growing up in battle strength by each second, by each move, and by each difficulty. Seeing that caused Aruv and Freed's composed attitude to crumble as their look turned bitter. They were showing an intention to attack Hajime. Naturally the apostles also matched that intention and commenced their assault.

{I won't let thou-}

Right after that, a shadow covered the audience hall. That was the large body of Tio who turned into a dragon. Perhaps she used metamorphosis magic, her size was now larger by a level compared to usual. Her coloring also felt like it became blacker.

No matter how spacious the audience hall was, turning into a dragon inside limited space like this would only make her into a nice target. Tio herself should have also understood that, nevertheless. she still turned into a dragon, It was for the sake of becoming Hajime's shield using her body.

She took a position between Hajime and Aruv's group and turned into a castle wall using her dragon scales.

"Impertinent."

"Hmph, I'll take payback for before."

Aruv and Freed mercilessly launched attack magic. The apostles at the surrounding were also attempting to kill Tio using their disintegration ability without a drop of mercy.

By invoking sublimation magic, metamorphosis magic, and 'Pain Conversion' to the greatest effect, she heightened her ability of dragon scale reinforcement to the extreme, and for the last, she deployed many layers of wind barrier in an attempt to disperse the enemy's force but…her opponents were just too dangerous. Tio's beautiful black scales were shaved away in the blink of eye.

{Guu, uUUU…}

"Tio-. Don't be reckless!"

Tio's prided dragon scales became fragments and scattered everywhere along with a shockwave sound, looking at her state where her body was even possibly gouged out, Hajime couldn't endure and yelled.

While counterattacking using her breath attack, tail, and countless wind blades launched at the surrounding, Tio turned her long neck, her golden eyes that were split vertically carried blazing resolve in them, with that she faced Hajime.

{If not now, then when will it be the time to get reckless! Quickly go-}

"Tio…"

{That light is not normal! Quickly save Yue-. …Rest assured. Until Goshujin-sama embraces me, I absolutely won't die!}

"…Geez, thanks okay. I'm counting on you."

{Yes. Count on me-}

Hajime didn't turn back anymore and focused his mind on slaughtering the enemies standing in his way between him and Yue. He ignored the attack from behind by Aruv and Freed. He had said that he would leave it to the woman that he counted on. There was not the slightest bit of cause to pay it any more attention.

Like that, Hajime who pulverized several apostles finally arrived at the pillar of light.

“Yue-!!”

“——!!”

Looking at Hajime who leaped out from the crowd, the imprisoned Yue opened her mouth but her voice didn’t reach. From how Yue was breathing heavily, it was obvious that she had been testing every kind of magic. Even so, the unbreakable pillar of light was abnormal just like Tio said.

Yue inside the light was clutching her chest tightly with her hand while unease and pain showed on her expression, it seemed that she was receiving some kind of effect due to the torrent of light that was pouring down like heavy rain. Her figure that shook her head sometimes as though to shake away something was also making Hajime feel uneasy.

“I’ll smash it away-“

Hajime took out a pile bunker from his ‘Treasure Warehouse’ and aimed it at the pillar of light. He was releasing strafing fire at the apostles attacking him from behind using crossbits to buy time.

While feeling impatient hearing the charging sound peculiar for the pile bunker, he also had an expectation at the maximum strength attack from the weapon’s spec that had risen using sublimation magic, Hajime pulled the trigger at the same time with the completion of the charge.

GOGAAAAAAAAAAAAAN!!!

Tremendous impact sound resounded, the jet black giant stake pierced the pillar of light.

The pillar of light that was unharmed even against Yue’s magic, but now just why it was so easily pierced like this…without even any time to ask that doubt, cracks ran noisily with that pierced area as the center, Hajime activated the pulverizing vibration of his artificial hand while launching a punch of all his might along with a loud yell of fighting spirit.

“RAAH!!”

Combined with ‘Strong Arm’ and ‘Impact Conversion’, the fist that had immense power residing in it straightly pierced through the pillar of light, the pillar was smashed into small pieces with a bursting destructive sound. The light pouring down to the ground raged like a flood, scattering particles of light while hiding the figures of Hajime and Yue from view temporarily.

“-, Yue!”

Sweeping away the eerie light particles coiled around them. Hajime went toward the spot where Yue was and reached his hand. Even now when the pillar of light was destroyed, Hajime was still calling at Yue impatiently because when their eyes met just before the pillar of light was destroyed, Yue’s expression was distorted in pain. A bad premonition was surging through his whole body.

“Yue-“

“…I’m here.”

Yue finally responded after he called at her for a few times. Soft sensation was transmitted at the tip of his reached hand. It was Yue's hand. Right after that, Yue showed her figure from the interval of the light particles. She leapt into Hajime's chest.

"I'm glad. Yue, are you unharmed?"

"…Fufu, I'm all right. Rather, I actually feel refreshed."

"Ah? Yue? You——"

With her face still pressed on his chest, Yue answered with a voice that sounded cheerful somewhere in it. Hajime narrowed his eyes to that. And then, the moment his unending bad promotion that still rang alarm bell inside himself even with this reunion changed into a chill and repugnance, Hajime tried to take distance right away.

But, it seemed that it was slightly too late.

"Gahah…you bastardd…"

"Fufufufu, this is really a good feeling, Irregular. Just how long it had been since I last materialized in this world…"

Hajime was unable to take distance. It was Yue's voice, Yue's figure, be that as it may, Hajime was convinced that it wasn't Yue, due to this 'someone' clad in an atmosphere that gave off a feeling of dread somehow. He couldn't take distance because this someone——stabbed his stomach.

The weapon was Yue's slender arm. That hand which formed a chopping shape stabbed straight, piercing through completely until his back. The small hand of Yue that was normally willowy was now colored with ghastly red and dripping wet.

Right after that, the wildly scattering particles of light whirled toward above and vanished. Unnoticed the apostles stopped moving, Shia and others sent them doubtful but vigilant gaze, but they immediately returned to their senses and sent their gaze at the direction of Hajime and Yue. And then, their mouth fell wide open looking at the hard to understand scene in bewilderment.

Hajime immediately emitted magic power and tried to blow away Yue using 'Impact Conversion'. The current Yue was obviously not in a normal state, based on her willingness to attack him, Hajime decided that for the time being he should take distance.

However, that was also beyond his power.

"I command in the name of Ehito——'Don't move'"

"-!?"

Hajime opened his eyes in shock. The reasons were two. The 'name' that came out from Yue's mouth, and his body that helplessly obeyed that command. It was as though all the nerves inside his body were blocked and then stiffened as though he was a preserved specimen.

The one with the figure of Yue, who if what she said was true then this was 'the creator god Ehito', smiled sweetly at such Hajime. That smile made Hajime feel déjà vu. It wasn't Yue's smile, it was

something he saw even farther in the past…yes, it was when they were summoned to this world at the holy church headquarters God Mountain, the portrait of Ehito that he saw inside that cathedral, it was the smile that was painted there.

Ehito pulled out the arm from the stomach of Hajime who was drenched in sweat while unable to move. Immediately, blood spurted out grandly from Hajime's stomach. While bathing in that spray, Ehito that was colored with gruesome red crawled his tongue leisurely at the blood dripping his hand.

"Hou, is this the sweetness that a vampire feel. Not bad. I thought that I will kill you at the end of your despair but…if you like, how about I keep you alive as livestock? Hm?"

"Fuu, fuu, –AAAAAAAAH!!"

In front of Ehito who was spouting out words full of malice while smiling friendlily, Hajime who was restrained by an unknown technique screamed. A Large amount of blood spurted out from his stomach that had a hole opened there, but he put his strength without even paying attention to that. The radiance of his 'Limit Break' also increased further.

And then there was a sound *bakin* that sounded like something broke, at the same time Hajime recovered the freedom of his body and leaped backward at one go. At the same time, Donner was aimed at Ehito and it roared.

There would be no problem against physical damage with Yue's regeneration power. Anyway, right now it was necessary to suppress the enemy.

But, that bullet was…

"kh"

It stopped still in front of the hand of Ehito who was standing calmly, it didn't even manage to touch him.

"Oh hoh, to unbind my 'Divine Statement' by your own power. Perhaps I should say, as expected from an irregular. ——'Heaven Miracle'."

Right after that, twenty lightning sphere floated at Hajime's surrounding and walls made from thunder were formed. And then, within an instant, a pillar of an extremely gruesome lightning attack ran through Hajime.

That was the highest grade of lightning element magic that once granted bitter damage toward the hydra of the last trial at the bottom of the abyss. But, the might of this magic was in a different league compared to that time. The number of the created lightning sphere, the speed of deployment, and then also the lightning strike itself, from how Hajime in 'Light Speed' state was unable to escape from the barrier of lightning spheres, anyone could tell about the bizarreness of the magic.

Gruesome lightning thundered inside the audience hall, the field of vision of the people there was dyed pure white, their eardrums were buried under thunderous roar.

"Hajime-san"

"Hajime-kun!"

“Goshujin-sama-“

The scream of Shia, Kaori, and Tio who had released her dragonification echoed among the thunderous roar.

Without even any composure to question why for some reason the apostles didn’t hinder them rushing at Hajime, they lifted their arms to cover their face from the shockwave of the fiercely sparking lightning while stepping forward.

Before long the lightning strike of tremendous might settled and what appeared from the center where white smoke was rising, was Hajime who had white smoke similarly rising from his whole body. It seemed that the lightning broke through the defense of ‘Vajra’ and he received direct attack,

Looking carefully, the crossbits that were supposedly deploying at Hajime’s surrounding were all lying on the ground. Surely Hajime was trying to lay out a barrier using crossbits, but before the crossbits could do that they were struck down first. Looking from their state, they were likely being put under gravity magic.

However, Hajime had activated ‘Limit Break’. Even while injured with burn on his whole body his consciousness wasn’t blown away, he gritted his teeth while glaring at Ehito who was possessing Yue.

“So you endured that, Irregular. But, having been showered by that much electricity you probably cannot avoid becoming dulled. ——’Four Directions Quake Sky’——’Spiraling Calamity Sky’.”

Hajime’s instinct raised an alarm bell in full blare. He reflexively leaped away, but seeing the scenery where the whole surrounding distorted like jelly, he realized that there was already no place to escape. He cursed inside his heart while once more deploying ‘Vajra’ fully and took out a large shield at the same time.

Right after that, shockwaves that burst the space attacked Hajime from four directions, at the same time gravity bombing that was whirling like a hurricane crashed from overhead.

“-a, aAAAAAAAAA-“

His large shield was pulverized like a joke, ‘Vajra’ that he deployed was easily pierced., it was an outrageous storm of age of god magic that brought immense impact. It was obviously a use of power that easily surpassed the current Yue.

“Stop it!”

“Get away from Hajime-kun and Yue-“

“To hit Goshujin-sama using Yue’s body…that’s worthy of ten thousand death!”

Shia and others who guessed the outline of the situation from Yue’s action and the relation between Aruv and Denreed rushed all at once to hold down Ehito.

However, against those three, what Ehito released was only one word.

“I command in the name of Ehito——’prostrate’.”

”Auh”

“Kyaah”

“Nuo!?”

Just from that Shia, Kaori, and Tio were struck to the ground as though an immense power was crushing them from above and they became unable to move. That was a fatal opening.

“——’Devouring Strange Beast’.”

Along with those words, the floor around the three bulged up and in an instant turned into wolves made from stone. And then, those sharp claws pierced on the back of the three while pressing down. The three raised pained voice, but the stone large wolves opened their jaws in annoyance and put their sharp fangs on their neck as though ordering the three to shut up.

Kaori tried to blow away everything using disintegration ability. However, even faster than she could invoke it…

“I command in the name of Ehito——’suspend your function’.”

“a——”

Due to Ehito’s command, light vanished from Kaori’s eyes. It was as though she had turned into a mere doll. Judging from Ehito’s words, he made Kaori’s body of apostle to change into suspended state. Perhaps it was something like the special right of the creator.

At the same time when Shia, Kaori, and Tio were completely suppressed, the storm of magic attacking Hajime finally petered out. Hajime stood still for a short while, but he immediately vomited blood from his mouth like a waterfall and fell on his knee like a marionette that had its string cut.

Looking at the state of Hajime, Shia, and co, Shizuku and others yelled their names while also rushing at them.

But, as expected, before they could do that,

“——’Stigmata of Twisted World’.”

Although he was on his knee, Hajime showed his will to not put both his hands on the ground. The space distorted and took a shape of a cross above such Hajime. That phenomenon which was created from the distortion of space itself was like a glasswork with extremely high transparency. The cross was guided only by Ehito’s gaze and fell on Hajime’s back.

“Gahah”

The severe pressure made Hajime further vomited blood, just like that he was helplessly crushed down. The cross made from distorted space stood up like a grave marker on Haijme’s back. That cross was fixed at the space like that, sewing Hajime on the ground.

Ehito didn’t stop and with a flowing motion he pointed his finger at Shizuku, Ryutaro, and Suzu and formed words.

“——’Manifestation of Arresting Nightmare’.”

“-, a”

“Hih”

“U, a”

Just with that Shizuku and others turned pale while tumbling down. And then they caressed their neck as though to ascertain that their head was still really connected, they looked down to see whether their legs were still there and began to confirm the texture with trembling hand. But, it seemed they couldn’t feel anything and so their pale face didn’t recover their color back. They didn’t even look like they could stand up.

These members could even take on the apostles, monsters, and the puppet soldiers, but now they were easily annihilated just by Ehito who had possessed Yue. This result caused Shia and others who were crawling on the ground to be shocked while gritting their teeth at the same time.

“Hmm. Well, this is how it is I guess. In this world of mine, everything is the same like trash. Although, perhaps without this excellent body then I might not be able to use my strength as it is. Are you listening, irregular?”

“Guh…”

Ehito walked around with steady steps while talking calmly at Hajime who was crucified on the ground. Hajime tried to operate his crossbits but it seemed enormous gravity was put on them and they didn’t even twitch while sinking on the ground.

He somehow twisted his neck and turned his gaze to take a look, there without him noticing the crossbits protecting Myuu and Remia were also in the same condition. Myuu whispered “Papa” while staring at Hajime with an expression that almost burst crying.

Aiko’s group looked like they wanted to step forward to try to help Hajime and others, but they were stopped by the apostles and they were helpless to do anything.

Hajime was going to take out explosive items from the ‘Treasure Warehouse’ and blown away Ehito altogether with himself. Perhaps he would be saved if he protected only his vital spots with the ‘Concentrated Reinforcement’ of ‘Vajra’, and then he could recover as long as he could drink god water.

But, as though that intention of his was read ahead, right at the moment when Hajime was about to activate ‘Treasure Warehouse’, Ehito snapped his fingers with a gesture that gave off elegance.

As the result, the ring of ‘Treasure Warehouse’ worn on Hajime’s finger suddenly vanished, the next moment the ring transferred on Ehito’s palm. Not only Hajime’s ‘Treasure Warehouse’. On Ehito’s palm, there were also several other rings there. Those were the ‘Treasure Warehouse’ Hajime created for Shia and others. It seemed that without even making a gate, Ehito teleported multiple objects at the same time with pinpoint precision.

Not just that, right after that at Ehito’s Surrounding, Donner, Schlag, and Doryuken, black katana and so on, many artifacts that Hajime created were teleported and now ended up floating in the air while rotating.

“These are good artifacts. Several of the artifacts among these are also quite interesting. It seems that the world of irregular is a pleasant world in its own way. Fufu, even I have grown tired of amusing myself with this world. It’s difficult for an existence of only soul to transfer to another world but…now I have obtained my own vessel, how about I try playing in another world this time then.”

Ehito who played with the ‘Treasure Warehouse’ while chuckling with an evil smile that Yue would absolutely never make suddenly clutched his palm tightly. And then, a light leaked out slightly from inside the fist and when the hand was opened what appeared was the scattered remain of the ‘Treasure Warehouse’ that looked like dust. The hand then tilted with a relaxed motion and the dust wreckage clad in dregs of light spilled down smoothly.

The fragments of ‘Treasure Warehouse’ were scattered right before Hajime’s eyes as though to show him despair. And then as though being swallowed by coiling light, the remains finally vanished without leaving behind even a single dust.

The items stored inside the destroyed ring didn’t come out. Surely all the items were collected with some kind of method and annihilated. Furthermore in front of the widely opened eyes of Hajime, beginning from Donner – Schlag, other weapons were also turned into dust before getting engulfed into light and vanished.

“Oops, I forgot something.”

While making a smile that was obviously showing how he absolutely didn’t forget anything, Ehito’s gaze turned at Hajime’s artificial arm. And then, just like what was done to all the other artifacts, magic power was released while Ehito’s fingers snapped.

Just from that, Hajime’s artificial arm crumbled with a loud sound. Hajime’s artificial arm had pseudo nerves from magic power going through it so that he was able to sense touch and also temperature. Naturally, that included pain. Although he could adjust it, the sudden pulverization of the left arm tormented Hajime with intense pain and he raised a howl mixed with fury.

“FUCKING BASTAAAAAAARD!!”

“You really flounder on the ground well. Even though your inside has been messed up. Perhaps making you into my vessel would also be good. Though my heart had been completely diverted to you by the survival of my vessel who was supposedly lost three hundred years ago…no, your magic talent is really no comparison I guess.”

Hajime was in the middle of raising his crimson magic power, it undulated and made the binding of space magic to creak loudly, however Ehito wasn’t even particularly bothered by it and was only thoroughly observing Yue’s(his own) body while making a pondering face. It appeared that he was thinking that something like Hajime’s struggle was of no importance.

Hajime saw that…immediately after he pulsed his crimson magic power. The magic waved with pounding pulse *dokun dokun* like a heartbeat, the magic power of ‘Limit Break’ was further increasing without limit. Right after that, the crimson magic power burst like an eruption. The torrent of crimson magic power traced a spiral that pierced the ceiling——the last derivation of ’Limit Break’, ‘Supreme Break’.

Until now there was no enemy too strong that Hajime couldn't defeat using 'Limit Break' and so he hadn't awakened this derivation, but in front of the overwhelming strength of the creator god, this skill finally bloomed. The act of Ehito who was using Yue's body looking as if he was the owner of that body, perhaps it didn't even need to be said that it became the fire that lit the fuse of Hajime's rage that had been pooling inside so much.

At a slightly distanced spot, Aruv who was shedding tears while sporting a look of ecstasy from the descent of Ehito returned to his senses suddenly and his expression flipped over into a shudder. That was because the torrent of magic power Hajime emitted rivaled the divinity that he possessed after manifesting in this world by possessing the excellent man called Denreed. Although his strength was so far separated from Ehito, he couldn't help but be shocked.

"My lord!"

"It's fine, Aruvheit. This is just the struggle of a bug after all. I command in the name of Ehitorujue(・・・・) ——'quiet down'."

The name was different with the name from before. No, the name was further appended. As the result, it affected Hajime with immense power. It was truly far more effective than the command of 'Don't move' before this.

The radiance of the roaring light of magic power was gradually settling down. It was as though Hajime himself was obeying Ehito's command, he was currently canceling 'Supreme Break' with his own will.

"aAAAAAAH!!"

Hajime raised a scream once more. Crimson magic power flickered repeatedly as though to display the conflict inside its owner. Looking at that, Ehito warped Yue's face evilly. From the depth of his heart, he was feeling that it was interesting like watching a sideshow. Possibly, it was to laugh at the desperate struggle.

"Hou, it's unexpected that you will resist even the 'Divine Statement' using my true name. …You give me quiet some entertainment. Your comrades defeated, your beloved stolen, the artifacts you relied on were also crushed. Even so you still don't have enough of my despair."

"…Ob, viously. I will…kill you-. Take back…Yue-. …This will end with that-"

"Ku-ku-ku-. I see I see. Then, I think it's about time to finish this. I too am very much happy that I am able to reveal the reason why your resolve is not yet exterminated."

Ehito made a full smile toward Hajime who was overflowing with killing intent while vomiting blood. And then, he daringly invoked an original magic created by Yue.

"——'Five Heavenly Dragons'…it's quite an elegant magic. I'm pleased with it."

With Yue as the center, five magic dragons manifested. But their might was far surpassing when it was used by Yue. The density of the dragons was at a different league. If it was the current Five Heavenly Dragons, surely it was possible to annihilate even that large Abusodo just with one of the dragons in one attack.

The five elements magic dragons raised their long neck and the glint of their eyes fixed at their respective targets. Myuu and Remia, Aiko and Liliana's group, Shizuku and Ryutaro and Suzu, Shia and Kaori and Tio, and then Hajime.

It was clear what they were planning to do. In front of Hajime's eyes, Shia and others were going to be eaten by the magic dragons. Everything that Hajime had, would be stolen in front of his eyes by the magic of his beloved, Ehito would enjoy to his heart's content the figure of Hajime that was tormented by incomparable despair before dealing the finishing blow.

"Yue-! Open your eyes!"

"Fufu, in the end you are going to rely on your lover? That's pointless. This is already mine. Or else is this buying time? After all even during this time, the commandment on you is loosening. Good grief, you are quite something. …But, in the end you are just a tiny human."

"Yue-! You should be able to hear my voice-. Yue-!"

Hajime's killing intent was able to make many monsters near him lose consciousness when they were hit by it, but Ehito only narrowed his eyes as though he was hit by a pleasant breeze, along with joy, he bared the fang of magic that was personally polished by Yue herself at the people who couldn't move.

His slender finger was lifted up as though to make a show, he was going to swing the finger down as though to sever their thread of life——at that time,

"-!? What…my magic power…the body…don't tell me-, impossible-"

Suddenly Ehito opened his eyes wide, his body was trembling. His body staggered as though his body was not working freely, the control of his magic power also didn't go as he wished and the Five Heavenly Dragons flickered. Aruv and Freed were agitated. Shia and others were also gazing at wonderment when at this absolutely desperate predicament Ehito showed pain.

There, a voice resounded.

——I won't let you

That voice which resounded in the audience hall like a telepathic communication had the same voice tone like Ehito who was spouting curse in irritation. Be that as it may, in the ears of Hajime and others, it was a charming voice that was far lovelier.

"Yue-!"

"Yue-san!"

The voices of Hajime and Shia yelled with the color of happiness filling them. Kaori and the others also yelled Yue's name from their mouths.

Regardless of the nearly lethal amount of blood that Hajime had already vomited, his body and magic power howled as though he had recovered his vitality. The cross on his back creaked and cracks began to appear on it. Shia and the others also raised a yell of fighting spirit trying to stand up.

However…

“Kuh, don’t get carried away, you lowly mortals. I command in the name of Ehitorujue! ——’Suffer’!”

Even while sweating coldly, Ehito released a powerful ‘Divine Statement’ using his true name. Due to that, terrific agony ran through their whole bodies, Shia and the others displayed a look full of agony. They writhed while screaming loudly.

There was only one person, Hajime who was strong against pain endured without raising even a pip even while his expression distorted. Even so, he was really not in a condition that could break the binding right away.

“…Aruvheit. I will return to the Holy Precincts for the moment. I planned to use the opening of this vessel’s shaken mind created by your deception but… as expected compared with this state of open heart, it seems that this possession is not going flawlessly. It’s unbelievable, but this vessel is resisting even with me as the opponent. Adjustments are necessary.”

“My, my lord. My deepest apology…”

Aruv’s original talk before this was for the sake of making the Ehito’s possession certain. The relation between body and mind was something extremely connected. Even for a god, it was hard for a perfect hijacking of the body. That was due to the limitation that gods couldn’t exert their power fully if they weren’t in their Holy Precincts…in any case, they made use of Denreed’s memory in order to open Yue’s heart even for a moment.

But, their scheme was obstructed by Hajime. Aruvheit attempted to at the very least shake up Yue’s mind to make it easier to possess her when he spoke the last words of Denreed, but…with Yue who had already rallied her mind as the opponent, as expected a perfect possession was just out of reach.

Ehito lightly waved his hand at Aruvheit who was shrinking in fear and replied.

“It’s fine. If I have three, four days I’ll be able to seize this body. I’ll leave this place to you. Freed, Eri, you can come together with me. Your wishes, I’ll grant them to you.”

“Yes, everything is according to the lord’s will.”

“Okay ookay. You will give me a world where I can be together with just Kouki-kun right? Then, I’ll do whatever it takes you knooow”

Glancing at Hajime and the others who were writhing in agony, Ehito somehow suppressed the consciousness of Yue and then lifted his hand above his head after giving instructions yo Aruv and the others.

Thereupon, this time light particles that resembled the light pouring down before this flew high from that hand, a part of the ceiling of the audience hall was erased in a circle shape, without stopping it continued blowing through until it made a hole to the outside.

The light particles ascended to the sky as it was, it created ripples in the sky above the devil king castle while producing a large round gate. It was a powerful gate made from light particles that connected the heaven and earth——truly a spectacle that came out right from myth. Most likely it was the gate for going to the place that Ehito called the Holy Precincts.

When Ehito lowered his lifted-up hand he then floated lightly, he lorded over Hajime and the others from the nearby ceiling.

“Irregular gentlemen and ladies. I’ll take my leave here. The soul that is making a cute resistance has to be taught its place without fail. And then, I’m thinking to make this world lively with blooming flowers in three more days. I will fill the world with crimson flowers made from people. That will be the last game. After that, I’m thinking that I am going to try playing in another world. Although, this is something unrelated with all of you who are going to die in this place, isn’t it?”

It appeared Ehito was seriously planning to end this world, and then he was going to choose earth as his new sphere of activity. And then, the time limit of that was three days. It was the needed time for him to seize Yue’s body.

“Wa, it-, return back, Yue…”

Hajime reached his hand towards Yue with a voice that sounded like it reverberated from the bottom of the earth. Before anyone realized the cross had been destroyed and he stood up by driving off the influence of the ‘Divine Statement’. Under his feet there was literally a sea of blood created there, it was as though all the blood inside his body had completely flowed out.

Hajime was clad in crimson magic power while he leapt. But he was assaulted by the apostles from behind and got held down. Furthermore, Aruv used some kind of technique and stiffened Hajime’s body. The apostles wrestling him used their disintegration ability and dispersed the magic power covering his body and all the magic circles of transmutation built into his clothes.

Even so, Hajime held on to his consciousness that was hazy from excessive bleeding with killing intent and hatred, he was still struggling, reaching his hand toward Yue.

Despite his state that was already completely held down and his wounded body, it wouldn’t be strange if he dropped dead anytime. The eyes of the apostles wavered as though they were holding fear somewhere inside from looking at Hajime who was advancing forward little by little.

Ehito who gave a glance at that snorted with a distorted mouth. And then, without stopping he ascended toward the shining gate in the sky.

Freed, Eri, and then Kouki too followed after him. Eri was clinging to Kouki once more while whispering in his ear, Kouki then nodded with a comprehending face. Surely, she was planting ‘rightness’ that was convenient for Kouki again. In front of Ehito who was supposed to be the enemy, Kouki didn’t even make any fuss. Far from that, he instead directed a determined gaze at Shizuku and the others. That was quite a proof of his state.

Suzu tried to say something and her mouth opened, but pain hindered her and no voice came out. Eri too was already not seeing any one of them anymore.

Continuing after Freed, Eri, and Kouki, the apostles, monsters, and puppet soldiers were also floating up. Around half of them were raising to the sky. Outside of the devil king castle too, a great number of apostles and monsters, and then the devil race people were heading toward the shining gate in the sky.

Ehito who was visible from the hole at the ceiling stopped in front of the gate and then spread his arms as though to welcome all those people to come in. It was just like the portrait that they once saw at the cathedral. It was as though Ehito was saying that everything belonged to him.

The devil race people raised excited shouts. Surely they had been notified about this time from quite some time ago. This was the supreme moment for them when they were welcomed by god to enter heaven.

Ehito smiled sweetly at those people and then he went into the light and melted into it.

“YUEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE-!!!”

Hajime’s scream echoed meaninglessly.

His reaching out hand, didn’t grasp anything.

In that hand, the lovely sensation that had always warmed it was….

Not there anymore.

Chapter 157 – Signal of Counterattack

Since other websites have been taking my joke chapter and claiming it’s the real one, I didn’t want you guys to leave unhappy, so here is the REAL chapter. It’s probably better. Consider this my weekend release early.

All credit goes to the original author (Chuuni Suki), who has posted the raw data here:

http://ncode.syosetu.com/n8611bv/158/

Thanks for your continued support. If you like my writing style, check out my original works at www.wattpad.com/user/elementalcobalt, or just leave a comment.

Bakapervert translated this chapter. Elementalcobalt did the edits.

Signal of Counterattack

In the devil king castle, the audience hall, a scream echoed.

A voice calling out the name of their beloved lover sounded too sorrowful, it was like a wailing.

Hajime who was the one who raised that scream was being held down by several apostles. Right now, he was in a posture where his forehead was rubbing on the floor. His one arm that reached out looking for Yue who had left after being turned into the vessel of the creator god Ehito, was forced to his back to the limit of its joint by an apostle.

Shia and the others were pushed down on the floor by claws pushing on their back by large wolves made from the stone floor, they were crucified on the floor while blood gushed out from their bodies. Shizuku and her group were also unable to move due to the illusion shown to them by Ehito’s magic and the influence of ‘Divine Statement’.

Aiko and the rest were also being observed by the apostles and monsters. Combined with their wounds from before, they weren't in the condition to move.

And then, the artifacts that Hajime relied on were already gone.

If an example was made using chess terminology, this situation was exactly what one would call 'checkmate'. For that reason, even Ehito prioritized to resolve the problem of Yue's resistance rather than dealing the final blow to Hajime and the others.

The distorted smile Ehito directed at Hajime who screamed for Yue was a satisfied smile that was colored by joy and pleasure from 'looking to his heart content at Hajime's suffering figure'. That too was the reason for him leaving the aftermath at his retainer Aruvheit.

With ten apostles and thirty monsters remaining behind, the audience hall now felt somewhat deserted. There, a steady footstep resounded.

"Kuku-. How unsightly, irregular. There was a slight problem at the end, but Ehito-sama seemed greatly pleased by that vessel. All of this is thanks to you who discovered 'that' and brought it here while granting it strength. I'm thanking you here, you know?"

With a voice that was overflowing with joy and scorn, Aruvheit spouted out muddy black words of malice.

In contrast, far from objecting, Hajime was only hanging his head down and his body didn't even twitch. The killing intent and hatred that made even the apostles shudder before this, and then the unstoppable torrent of strength, all of that couldn't even be felt even a bit from Hajime's body. From his wounded state and the amount of his bleeding, in a glance it even looked like he had already stopped breathing.

Aruvheit also thought that. He tilted his head before directing his gaze at one of the apostles holding down Hajime. The apostle quietly shook her head and directed a dangerous gaze at the back of Hajime's head. It seemed that Hajime was still properly alive.

"Hmm, just where has your might that you showed at the beginning gone? Well, I want to say that, but even you have a limit, huh. Although, there is a hole opened in your stomach, you got hit by that much magic of my lord, further you forced your body to use strength that surpassed the limit several times. I guess it's astonishing for you to even still breath. Or else, was it your beloved lover who got stolen that became the finishing blow? Hm?"

"… Just stop screwing around desu-, this third rate villainn! If you haven't played enough yet then I'll take you on-"

Aruvheit said out tormenting words, however Hajime didn't respond, as though to represent him an angry yell rose from different place. It was Shia.

By yelling, the claw pushing on Shia's back dug in even deeper and blood flowed out more, but without even paying attention to such a thing Shia clawed on the floor while trying to advance.

Looking at such a Shia, the large wolf's eyes that were made of stone shrewdly narrowed, and then as though saying to shut up, its jaw sunk into Shia's shoulder. A raw sound was audible once more and

blood spurted out. The spraying blood dirtied Shia's neck and the side of her face, her figure looked ghastly.

"-!?——ngigi-gii, you think I'll losee! I'll send you flying, all of you together-. Just come at me desuu!"

Even so Shia didn't even scream in pain, she yelled in anger while strengthening her struggle. The frustration of being unable to do anything, that she could only see Hajime get hurt and Yue taken away, combined with the strength that she continued to knead even now, strength was explosively heightening inside Shia.

And then, finally *bakin* a sound like something getting broken resounded, Shia's arm that could only move meagerly leaped up.

BAMM!

Such a thunderous sound was raised from the head of the large wolf biting at her shoulder being blown away. From that, the wound of her shoulder was gouged and blood spurted out even more, but as expected, Shia didn't pay it any attention. She stepped on the ground so hard that the floor split and she rapidly approached Aruvheit.

"URYAAAAAAAAA-!"

Her rabbit ears flapped, along with eyes that were tinged with clear killing intent to first slaughter the strongest enemy, Shia's fist struck Aruvheit.

DONGON Fierce shockwaves reverberated. Shia's fist drew a splendid trajectory and pierced Aruvheit's face… or that was how it looked like.

However…

"Hou, after irregular you too also got free from Ehito-sama's 'Divine Statement'… Good grief, so an insolent fellow is being served by insolent woman. How wretched."

"Kuh, just a barrier like this-!"

A barrier was deployed just from Aruvheit lifting his hand slightly, stopping Shia's fist that was like a cannon dead in its track.

With a calm expression without a drop of anything like unease, Aruvheit concluded Shia as insolent. Ignoring that, Shia swung her fist once more.

Aruvheit's expression turned annoyed feeling that it would just end up the same no matter how many times Shia punched, but Shia's second attack raised a groan even louder, and then a crack entered the barrier of Aruvheit.

"What the?"

"Fly away desuu!"

Perhaps Aruvheit had never imagined in even his wildest dream that other than Hajime who was named as irregular, there would be someone else who could make his barrier cracked, furthermore it was by bare hand. Aruvheit looked on slightly in wonderment.

Not missing that opening, Shia made use of the recoil of her second punch and rotated on the spot, she put a lot of the centrifugal force and released a spinning kick at the place where a crack was created. Her firm long leg was reinforced to the limit, and the kick was unleashed with a incomparably beautiful form.

While her rabbit ears was flowing lithely, *pyaaan* a bursting sound resounded, Shia's spinning kick pierced the barrier. And then without stopping, her kick assaulted Aruvheit who was inside.

Aruvheit immediately crossed his arms and blocked Shia's kick, but he was unable to brace himself against the weight that surpassed his imagination, just as Shia said, he was grandly blown away.

Shia's kicking leg didn't stop and it was lifted until reaching the zenith, then her leg was brought down to the ground following the tenet of an axe kick. And then she spun like a pinwheel with high speed, with her legs she flicked off the many floor fragments that floated in the air from the broken floor.

The pebbles that were flicked away resembled bullets and cut through the air with high speed, becoming a pursuit attack at Aruvheit.

The pebbles assaulted like a sweep of gatling guns toward Aruvheit who crashed through a stone pillar in the audience hall, dust clouds rose due to the broken stone pillar.

"Not yet de——!?"

"Fall down."

When Shia was about to attack further, the moment when Shia entered a crouching posture, apostles rapidly approached Shia from left and right with afterimages following behind them. In their hands were large swords clad in silver light of disintegration being swung.

Shia had been quite vigilant against the apostles and monsters, but she couldn't deny that blood had rushed to her head. Shia who got carried away and leaped forward too far now got aimed at the moment she stepped in, in her expression cornered emotion of "Damn it" showed through.

If only she had her Doryukken, she would be able to forcefully swipe them away, yet the nonexistence of the reliable sensation that she usually felt in her hand made her grit her teeth.

Like that, Shia resolved herself to receive damage to cut her way through, it was at that time,

"That is my line!"

Two streaks of black flash blown away the two apostles who pincer attacked Shia.

"Tio-san"

"Guh, divine statement was it? … Truly, it was troublesome. Shia, I take off my hat to thy guts."

When Shia immediately turned back, the figure of Tio in partial dragonification with her tail constricting the large wolf while making a pained expression was there. It appeared that unlike Shia, Tio wasn't completely escaping the influence of 'Divine Statement'.

Tio wasn't able to understand the magic until its principle, but even so she understood that it was a magic with terrifying effect. Therefore Tio couldn't help but giving words of praise at Shia who on top of completely removing the curse by her will alone, she was even able to give payback to Aruvheit.

Tio used the rampaging large wolf she constricted with her tail to strike at the large wolf holding down Kaori, while doing that she fired breath attack at an apostle brandishing a large sword from above to check the enemy in place. Her body was already enveloped in transparent black magic power, it showed that she was using sublimation magic.

Even so, an attack without gathering strength beforehand couldn't stop an apostle's charge, therefore the best Tio could do was making the apostle react immediately to take evasive action.

But, at that time, one more voice resounded.

"Tio-san, please wake up Kaori somehow! I'll cover for you! Shia, hold back the devil king-"

At the same time with the voice, a black shadow slipped past Tio's side. That was Shizuku who was clad in dark blue magic power and her ponytail that was her trademark.

Like that Shizuku used a unique way of walking to slip smoothly into the bosom of another apostle approaching Tio from behind, she took the wrist of the slightly surprised apostle and rolled the apostle's body to float in the air. And then the apostle went into a losing posture *due to her own rush of momentum*. Shizuku grasped the stomach of the apostle and with her other arm she struck an elbow blow there. It was so to speak an aikido technique, one of Yeagashi-style taijutsu 'Kyourai'. (TN: Taijutsu=bare handed martial art. Kyourai=Mirror Thunder.)

The elbow blow that carried power which was impossible if it was only Shizuku's strength, coupled with the deftness of that technique succeeded in temporarily blowing away the apostle.

Shizuku was also barely driving off the curse of 'Divine Statement'. The magic power enveloping herself came from sublimation magic. She made her body performance to evolve a level higher. As the result it was a pseudo 'Limit Break'.

She didn't use it until just now because of the intense pain of the illusion as well as the wavering of her mind. Actually she didn't shake off the effect of the illusion completely, so her expression distorted from enduring intense pain and cold sweats trickled from her body.

"Thou art speaking recklessly-"

"Ro, roger desu-!"

Tio threw the stone wolf constricted in her tail as improvised hammer at the apostle that she was made to take evasive action just now with her breath attack, then she rushed at Kaori's location. At the same time, Shia also slipped through the apostles and monsters coming to attack while dashing at where Aruvheit was.

Shizuku saw that there was further three more apostles who headed at her from all the apostles who acted after seeing the situation, she rushed to intercept them while in the way she picked a floor fragment and sent it flying with her reinforced body. It was one of Yaegashi-style throwing art 'Senreki'. The target was the eyeball of the apostles. (TN: Senreki=Piercing Pebble)

Although her body was reinforced using sublimation magic, the accuracy of the throwing itself was depending on the skill of the user. Something like aiming accurately at really small target that was the moving opponent's eyeball while dashing was an absurdly expert skill.

But, naturally the apostles easily lifted their sword and repelled the attack.

“Pointless.”

One of the approaching apostles directed inhuman gaze at Shizuku from the shadow of her large sword. And then she unfolded her silver wings and flapped it noisily once. Just with that countless silver feathers flew out from the wings like buckshot, they advanced to annihilate Shizuku.

Shizuku used ‘No Beat’ that realized radical motion which made it looked like the body was ignoring inertia and ‘Piled Ground shrinker’ which made it possible to consecutively executed ‘Ground shrinker’ and barely succeeded in evading the attack. While enduring the fear from her clothes, hair tip, and then her skin which got shallowly disintegrated by the grazing silver feathers, Shizuku rapidly approached with a low posture as though she was hugging the ground.

“I won’t know until I try!”

While yelling defiantly, Shizuku finally slipped through the barrage of silver feathers and she slid like a baseball player toward the apostles, she then thrust her hand below with a force that could split the floor, and then using the recoil she launched a scooping up kick.

One of Yaegashi-style taijutsu ‘Saka Shushou’. (TN: Reverse Eagle Claw) It was a kicking technique to lift up the opponent from really low posture. SO that the practitioner could still fight even after losing their sword, Yeagashi-style included sheath technique, taijutsu, and throwing skill in it.

Large eagle aimed at their prey and stretched their sharp claw from the sky——that kick drew a splendid trajectory like a reverse reproduction of that scene. Combined with the rushing momentum of ‘Ground Shrinker’ too, it contained quiet a destructive power. At the very least with the current Shizuku who was in the state of pseudo limit break using sublimation magic, if she was able to land a counter, then even an apostle could be blown away with her strength.

But, as expected, that plan was still naïve,

“No, it’s pointless.”

“__”

The kick was easily blocked by silver wing. Furthermore the part of her kicking leg’s boot that touched the wing was already disintegrating. It was disintegration ability.

Shizuku took a short breath, at the same time she rotated on the spot like pinwheel using her kicking leg as the axis. Her posture changed as though she was sleeping horizontally in the air, from there she aimed at the apostle’s face with her other leg. One of Yaegashi-style taijutsu ‘Jushusou’. (TN: Piled Eagle Claw)

However, even that was also blocked by the other wing of the apostle. And then, the apostle flapped her wings to drive off Shizuku and blew her away.

“Guh”

Shizuku struck the ground hard and she reflexively groaned. There, silver feathers poured down like heavy rain. Shizuku immediately evaded by leaping while she was on all fours like a beast. And then

Shizuku was rolling unsightly and barely evaded the silver feathers that brutally dispersed the ground one after another like intense rain.

At the same time, she picked up a fragment of broken floor again and threw it at the apostle which passed her that was going to head towards Tio who was treating Kaori.

The apostle didn't even look and repelled the pebble with her wing.

(I cannot even hold them back!? Even though I have to attract their attention until Kaori open her eyes and heal Nagumo-kun-)

Shizuku evaded the barrage of death with deathly desperate expression while yelling in her heart.

Shizuku's aim was for Tio to use soul magic or regeneration magic and revived Kaori whose consciousness was forcefully closed. If only Kaori could move again, she could heal Hajime with her excellent healing magic. If only Hajime could move, it should be possible to break the deadlock of the current situation, Shizuku thought like that. The faith that Shizuku held toward Hajime didn't change at all even now after he was defeated by Ehito.

Shizuku glanced with her gaze directed at Hajime who was being held down by two apostles still collapsing on his own sea of blood.

(The person that I fell in love seriously for the first time… the one that saved me many times… my heart, my life too… I can do anything if it is for that person's sake. Just because the opponent is apostle, just because there is no weapon, those are no reason to give up! This time, I'll be the one that save you!)

In contrast with the overwhelming heat boiling up in her heart, Shizuku began to chant with small whispering voice. Most of the artifacts were stolen, but fortunately she still possessed some things other than a weapon that might have been overlooked because it was trifling.

Those were the boots enchanted with 'Air Force', the hair ornament presented from Hajime for the first time that had regeneration ability attached, and then her clothes sewed with the magic circle of sublimation magic.

From the body of Shizuku who was continuously evading the fury of silver wings, abnormal dark blue magic power overflowed even more.

It was overlapping of sublimation magic. Something like a pseudo 'Supreme Break'. Naturally it was an exercise of strength that surpassed the limit even in the best of times. It was an act that piled up unreasonableness on top of unreasonableness, it was impossible that there was no burden at all doing that.

Shizuku's expression distorted in pain, she bit her lips hard to endure the undulation of the large power. In exchange of such pain, for a temporary time, surely it was only for a slight time, the magic power that reinforced Shizuku shined brilliantly while enveloping her body.

The apostle that passed through Shizuku heading toward Tio who was concentrating at healing Kaori, whose wicked hand even now was reaching at them. She twitched in reaction and looked back at Shizuku. However, perhaps deciding that it was nothing she needed to be concerned about the apostle turned back at Tio and brandished her sword.

Toward such apostle, Shizuku roared with rage.

“-, don’t look down on human-!”

The speed of Shizuku that amply displayed her specialty as a speed fighter, in addition with the sublimed acceleration that surpassed the limit, as expected it was at the level that even an apostle couldn’t stay indifferent at. The apostle raining down heavy rain of silver feathers at Shizuku opened her eyes wide in shock when she was passed through instantly from the side by Shizuku who dashed without any preliminary motion and everchanging step.

And then the apostle who was in the verge of swinging down her large sword also reflexively looked back at the presence that suddenly approached.

But, there was no way Shizuku would even give her the time to look back completely, without stopping she unleashed a severe spinning kick. Her aim was the back of the apostle’s head. The apostle who was going to turn her head had the direction of her head forcefully returned back by an impact, she was blown away above Tio’s head in a pitch forward.

Toward Shizuku who was hovering in the air from the recoil, one more apostle swept her large sword.

Shizuku lightly leaped using ‘Air Force’ and evaded that slash, then her body twisted in the air while when she crossed above the apostle, both her legs sandwiched the apostle’s head. And then, from there her body twisted even further and rotated with backward bending, crashing the apostle into the ground from the head.

Yeagashi-style taijutsu ‘Kaigetsu’. (TN: Circle Moon) A technique that executed a throw from twisting the body while both legs were holding the opponent’s head.

The human technique that was mysteriously polished made the apostle unable to react immediately, dangerously raw sound could be heard from the apostle’s neck when the head crashed to the floor. A small crater was created while the head was buried in an impossible angle.

In that timing, the apostle that was scattering silver feathers at Shizuku just now launched a bombing.

Shizuku naturally tried to dodge but…

“dam-!?”

She was unable to do that.

The reason was because behind her was Tio and Kaori. Before she realized, Shizuku was lined up at a firing line where she couldn’t escape.

If only she had her black katana, she could sever the space itself and she would be able to cut even the silver flash. But, the current Shizuku was barehanded. There was no way to stop the flash which carried the brutal ability of disintegration, to evade it meant to leave her comrades to death.

That hesitation was fatal. In front of the silver light of death, inside Shizuku’s head became pure white.

At that moment…

“’Sky Severance’!”

“’Holy Severance’!”

Two voices resounded. At the same time, in front of Shizuku’s eyes shining bright barriers were deployed.

One was a multiple layers barrier that had several barriers piled up——the caster was Liliana who drew a magic circle with her own blood and stretched her hand desperately to Shizuku.

The other one was a brilliantly shining powerful barrier——the caster was Suzu who even while drenched with cold sweat and her expression distorted in pain while still collapsed on the floor, she similarly drew a magic circle using blood and barely reached her hand.

The silver flash that brought about ruin was blocked by the barriers deployed by the desperate two and the speed of the advance was slightly slackened.

However, what was fired was a flash that disintegrated everything no matter if it was magic or material. Naturally the barriers of the two also held out less than a few seconds before they got dispersed.

Although that few seconds had the meaning of the time that could be bought. And then, that few seconds changed the fate of Shizuku who was exposed to that flash of death.

“Shizuku-chan-, get down!”

“-!”

Shizuku didn’t even looked back or asked back at that familiar voice and reflexively obeyed.

Immediately after, above the head of Shizuku who pressed herself on the floor a similar silver flash rushed forward. That flash which clashed at the silver flash of the apostle right from the front was unmistakably the attack launched by Shizuku’s best friend. Even though there was terrifying powers clashing above her head, the cheeks of Shizuku were naturally brimming with smile.

“Don’t think that I am the same with all of you!”

Kaori’s powerful words echoed at the space that was surging with silver light. At the same time, the magic power from Kaori burst out. It was the prove of reinforcement using sublimation magic. Just as she proclaimed, the silver flash Kaori launched went *dokun-!* in pulsation and simultaneously increased in momentum all at once.

And then, it swallowed the flash of the apostle.

“Overcoming us, with our body…”

At the same time when that whisper leaked out, the apostle that showed an indescribable expression was dispersed into pieces even smaller than dust and vanished.

“Somehow we made it.”

“Thank you Tio. I’ll heal everyone right awa-“

Tio revived Kaori using soul magic and regeneration magic together, but she now was in a state that couldn’t hide her exhaustion. She murmured while wiping her sweaty forehead.

Kaori spoke her gratitude while starting to use recovery magic. Not only Hajime, she was planning to heal everyone wounded all at once.

But that was obstructed by the silver large sword that jumped up right from the side. Aiming at Kaori who finished launching her attack, the two apostles that were hit by Shizuku's technique just now moved out.

With twin large swords Kaori blocked the slash from the two apostles. The two apostles who tried to slash with two large sword style, one had her arm entwined by Tio's dragon tail, the other one was prevented by Shizuku who averted the trajectory using Aikido to the ground. Kaori, Tio, and Shizuku, the three and the two apostles glared at each other in a deadlock.

There…

"Kyaa!"

"Aguu!"

Screams reverberated. When the gazes of the three reflexively turned there, Liliana and Suzu were currently held down there. Similar like with Shia and others before this, on their back they had sharp claws digging there.

In an effort to help them, Ryuutaro tried to move toward Suzu with a desperate look, Aiko and Nagayama and group squirmed toward Liliana. But, they too were constricted by snake type monsters or tied with the string of spider type monsters, in the end they were injected with some kind of liquid that made them convulse. They couldn't do anything.

Furthermore…

"Good grief, bothering my hand like this. Although I don't even reach below Ehito-sama's feet, there is no way you will be a match with a god like me, don't you think?"

Shizuku and the others were taken aback by that voice. They were desperate with their own battle that they didn't pay attention there, but now they turned their gaze wondering what happened with Shia who went to hold back Aruvheit.

And then, what was there was, the figure of Shia who powerlessly dangled in the air with her neck in Aruvheit's clutch. Furthermore, blood was flowing from her whole body as though several thousand blades had carved there, it seemed that she didn't lose consciousness, but even her groaning voice sounded weak.

"Shia-" X3

Kair and others opened their eyes wide and yelled.

In that instant, the attention of Kaori and others were definitely split. That opening wasn't missed by the apostles. With their twin swords they blown away Kaori and others into one place, then the apostles instantly created magic circle using their silver feathers where grand lightning attack was generated from there.

"-a!!"

“Guuu!”

“——!”

The three raised their respective scream while convulsing. Even so, only Kaori somehow lessened the damage using magic power of disintegration, then she immediately tried to chant recovery magic.

But…

“Didn’t you listen? I said that I am also a god. I command with the name of Aruvheit——’Don’t do anything’.”

“——”

Yes, the reason Shia lost was also due to the same ‘Divine Statement’ that was done to Kaori right now, it was because her movement was restricted. Although just as the person said himself, it seemed that the restraining power was quite inferior compared to Ehito.”

In reality, Kaori and others struggled to immediately break the restraints using reinforcement of sublimation magic. Different from when Ehito was the one using the ability, their arm immediately began to move.

However, it didn’t change that they were showing fatal opening, as long as there were the apostles and monsters here then even a temporary restrain was more than enough.

Facing Kaori and others who collapsed on the ground, a lightning attack surged once more. This time following the command of ‘don’t do anything’, Kaori also couldn’t disintegrate the attack and thus got hit fully. Kaori, Tio, and Shizuku screamed soundlessly then white smoke drifted up from them.

Although the momentary signal of counterattack raised the result of one apostle defeated, they were completely suppressed easily in the end.

Aruvheit lifted his hand and threw away Shia like trash, then he stepped on the back of the collapsed Shia while lording over the surrounding.

“Hmm, how is it? Have I managed to give you fools other than the irregular a little taste of despair?”

It appeared that Shia and the others were instantly killed in order to break their hearts.

Aruvheit shouldered the role to open the heart of Yue who would become Ehito’s vessel so that Ehito could easily steal her body or carry the plan B that was to shake Yue’s heart. Because he didn’t perform his role perfectly, Ehito was forced to take his time readjusting. Because of that, not only he was unable to accomplish the command bestowed from the lord that he respected, he even made his lord to be troubled, that caused his mind to become stormy.

In other words, he permitted Shia and others to oppose him, then he suppressed and struck despair into them so he could soak in joy from that, everything came from his wish to vent his anger.

In order to drop the insolent bunches who opposed him into despair and end them while they were in the depth of hopelessness, Aruvheit opened his mouth with an expression that was filled plenty with scorn.

“But, for a punishment to those who perpetrated insolence toward god, this is a bit too light I guess. Therefore, how about I teach all of you something really lovely.”

Trampling on Shia’s back underfoot, Aruvheit made her raised pained voice while looking at Liliana’s direction.

“Just as Ehito-sama spoken, this world will end before long. Armies of apostles will be summoned from the Holy Precincts to slaughter all living things in this world. The first target will be Hairihi Kingdom. Because it’s easy to create a Divine Gate that connected to Holy Precincts in God Mountain, you see. Do you understand, princess Liliana. Your motherland will be dyed red by fresh blood of all your people in these few days, you know.”

“-, what terrifying thing are you-“

“Is it terrifying? Rather it’s an honor, right? Those people can receive the end brought about by the angels dispatched by the god they believed in without a doubt. Shouldn’t they present their head in line instead? Ku-ku-ku-“

“You are mad! All of you, you gods are insane!”

Even while being pressed down by a monster, Liliana cursed at Aruvheit with voice blurred by pain and rage. Aruvheit that received that curse with pleasant feelings then turned his gaze to the visitors from another world.

“Your birthplace will become the new playground for Ehito-sama. You can feel honored. You are able to be summoned as Ehito-sama’s pawn, and then even your birthplace will be offered to him. Even if you all are ended in this place, you can depart along with glory.”

“Don’t screw around-!”

It seemed that what Ehito said that he would march to earth was true. Although there was no magic at earth, but if Ehito maneuvered secretly there where there was a lot of country, religion, population, and also type of weapons that were far more dangerous than magic, just how much sacrifice there would be…

This world, despite its long history its population was falling far short from earth, thinking of how the reason for that was because of how Ehito was playing this world, they didn’t even want to imagine what kind of tragic future was awaiting when Ehito reached earth.

To say nothing of the family or friend, their important people that they left behind by coming here. Shizuku and Ryutaro and others glared at Aruvheit with demonic look.

But, those piercing glares that wanted very much to kill him were only fanning up Aruvheit’s sense of superiority instead. The proof of that was how his expression was increasingly turning in pleasant ecstasy.

“Now then, looks like the reception of the devil race will be over soon. I want to taste this defiant hearts and despairing gazes for a while but… I too can only play just this much.”

Aruvheit looked up at the holed ceiling. Ahead of his gaze was the scene of the devil race people being sucked with enraptured expression into the whirling golden [Divine Gate].

As a matter of fact, even while Shia and others were fighting hard, the devil race all over the city were floating toward the [Divine Gate], the majority were already collected into the Holy Precincts. It appeared the one that would be exterminated in this world was all the living things other than the devil race——that means all the human race and the demihuman race. It was unknown just what in the world their reason to invite only the devil race into the Holy Precincts, but what was certain was only that the reason must be nothing good.

Aruvheit kicked Shia flying and then he exchanged a glance with an apostle. The apostle nodded and then she went straight toward Myuu and Remia. And then, ignoring how Remia was hugging Myuu close to her chest, the apostle forcefully took Myuu from her which caused Remia's expression to stiffen.

"Stop-! Please return back Myu——agu!?"

"Mamaa!"

The apostle's fist hit hard at Remia who was resisting desperately. Remia was blown away until the wall that she leaked out a small groan. Different from Shia and others, her body was only that of a civilian. Her internal organ was injured by the impact that the apostle released that she vomited out blood, she kept crouching and became unable to move.

A scream of a little child resounded, however, even so there was not even one person who could move.

Myuu who was taken by the apostle was crucified on the air by Aruvheit using some kind of magic, then he walked toward the position of Hajime who was still collapsed on the floor without even a twitch or a pip.

"Irregular. How long are you going to be like that? Not only you are a nuisance at various thing in Ehito-sama's game, you even put shame on me, are you thinking those sins can be redeemed with that degree of despair? There is no way that's true don't you think? Now, lift your face. And then, burn the scene of the head of the girl who idolized you as father got blown away into your eyes. Bath in her scattered brain and blood, cry and yell! Now!"

"Papaa! Don't die! Wake uup!"

The loudly laughing Aruvheit moved Myuu in front of Hajime. And then his hand propped the back of that small head. That was just like the scythe of the god of death. If, that hand was swung, without even the slightest resistance Myuu's future would surely sink into gruesome red, ejected into the depth of darkness.

But, even now when such death was shoved at her, Myuu didn't even be concerned about herself, she yelled in worry at the papa that she loved.

From afar Shia and others' desperate voice reached them. The voices that called Hajime, the voices that was worried for Myuu, the voices that asked Aruvheit to stop, the voices that proclaimed their self-sacrifice which said if he would do that then do it to them instead——everyone was desperately struggling in order to avoid the tragedy.

——It was a bizarre spectacle.

Hajime who in this kind of time should have his eyes glaring like a beast, his canine exposed as though he was going to tear the throat of the enemy with his killing intent overflowing, regardless of Myuu who he doted on was now going to get slaughtered… he was silent.

The apostles holding Hajime down didn't show any sign of releasing their hands at all, so it was certain that Hajime was conscious. Yet despite so, he was terribly, to terrifying level, silent.

Was Yue getting stolen that shocking for him, was his heart broken from that…

Shia and others who knew of Hajime's deep love toward Yue at first thought so looking at the unmoving Hajime, that was why they fought hard thinking that exactly because of that they had to do something somehow, but now that it had come to this point they finally felt something out of place.

And, they noticed. How unnoticed their skin felt gooseflesh rising. It was varnished by the pain running all over their body and the absolutely desperate situation, but the target of alarm bell their instinct raised was actually not at the enemy, the alarm was directed at something more different.

"Papa?"

Perhaps Myuu was also felt something the same like that, she called at Hajime somewhat timidly.

Looking at Hajime who didn't even lift his face with Myuu who only had worth to be used as hostage in front of him, Aruvheit got tired of waiting and he exchange glance with an apostle.

The apostle, for some reason she glanced at the back of Hajime's head with dangerous gaze that had never changed since she restrained Hajime. And then, surprisingly, after showing a gesture that looked like slight hesitance, she carefully grasped Hajime's hair with resolved air… and lifted his face forcefully.

"——"

At that instant, without even being able to realize it himself, Aruvheit stepped back.

It didn't stop there, he even did an elementary mistake that he had already never done for several thousand years——he showed an unsightly disarray of magic control. As the result, Myuu who was crucified in the air fell in front of Hajime.

Aruvheit who moved his arm in panic to fix the magic back at Myuu became wide eyed at an incomprehensible scene. For some reason, his hand that he held out was trembling in shivers.

The monsters standing by behind Aruvheit were also hanging their head down while shrinking back slowly. If anyone was watching, they would surely notice how the eyes of the monsters that originally emitted brutal reddish black gleam were now wavering like ripples.

——Fright.

For a monster, further for a monster of fiendish class that had received the strengthening by age of god magic, that emotion really didn't suit them at all. The wave running in their eyes was obviously was exactly that. Aruvheit's trembling was also the same.

The cause was one.

Abyss.

The abyss spreading in front of their eyes, was awakening their primitive instinctual fear.

Darker than darkness, deeper than even hell. Even while being a god, he would still get swallowed and vanish to became 'nothingness', he was made to feel such an illusion by that overwhelming nihility filling to the brim of that——eye.

Hajime's one eye.

"——Ki, kil——"

Aruvheit was driven by an impulse that even himself was hard to comprehend, he was trying to hand down the command to the apostles to kill Hajime right now. That person should be at the death's door, without even any weapons, and his heart snapped into pieces, even while thinking that, he couldn't help but give that command.

Something like used Myuu for revenge or being an obstruction at his work to open Yue's heart, or, if he was going to kill him then it would be by his own hand, or, denying how he stepped back due to his dignity as god, those kind of things only flashed for an instant at the back of his mind before they got thrown away far beyond his mind.

Anyway, the *monster* in front of his eyes had to be made to stop breathing, right at this instant!

Only that thinking repeated inside Aruvheit's chaotic head, it kept reiterating along with the piercing alarm bell.

That command was quickly obeyed by the apostles holding Hajime down.

Not even a drop of magic power, far from that not even killing intent or hatred or anything could be felt from Hajime, despite so it seemed that a bad premonition had been bothering them all along.

They wanted to get rid of him even a second faster, they wanted to erase him even an instant faster.

Even though they shouldn't have anything like emotion, the figure of the women who was going to carry out the incomplete command of the inarticulate Aruvheit like a faithful dog that snapped at the food which they had been forbidden to eat previously, was like the expression of that kind of emotion.

The blade hand of the apostles was tinged with silver light. Using the disintegration ability, they would completely erased the gruesomely wounded man before their eyes!

But, it seemed that action was a little, no, it was fatally late.

Aruvheit and others gave Hajime too much time.

As though the silence until now was a lie, demonic intent that shook everyone's dread overflowed. *Red* magic power that looked like blood spread stickily as though it would swallow everything. It looked just like the lid of hell's kettle was opened.

Like that, Hajime's voice that was finally let out was also something that made anyone hallucinate as though it came resounding from the bottom of hell. The meaning of his words too, it was dark and heavy as though it was merely trying to boil the listener earnestly… if it had to be said, it was a 'curse'.

"——Anything and everything, disappear(Deny All Existences)"

At that moment, a concept that denied the world was released.

Chapter 158 – Young Hero

"——Anything and everything, disappear(Deny All Existences)"

At that instant, sound of *boba-* could be heard from the three apostles holding down Hajime and they were bisected into two, upper part and bottom part. And then, right after that they were further torn to pieces left and right, top and bottom, left and right, in less than a few seconds they had turned into smithereens.

There was no blade, but even if there was one, the impossible phenomenon shouldn't be called bisection but should be called as dispersion in linear shape instead. Everybody was speechless, all of them only opened their eyes wide without moving. It was at that time magic power burst out thunderously.

A torrent whirled with Hajime at the center, however it was far different compared to his usual vivid crimson, it was a darkish red color of blood that looked poisonous. And this abnormal state of his was also conveyed to all the people in the audience hall whether they wanted it or not.

Hajime was slowly standing up in the middle of such situation. With a face that was pale like a ghost from losing blood, he exposed an expression even more inhuman than the apostles, *plop, plop* blood was dripping down…

Myuu who was right beside Hajime was covering her face with her hands to protect her face from the dark red magic power flow that was like a local storm while raising a small scream "kyaah". It looked like she would be blown away backward soon, but right after that, the floor under her feet crumbled as though it was dispersed where Myuu then fell there.

"H, hmph, pointless effort. I command under the name of Aruvheit, knee——, ah, igi, aaAAAAAAAAAAAA-!!"

Aruvheit somehow pulled himself back together and tried to stop Hajime using 'Divine Statement'. But, before he could finish his command, without any previous sign whatsoever Aruvheit's both hands were severed neatly from his shoulders.

Even when Aruvheit's forehead was shot before this he was still keeping his calm somehow, even when his four limbs were shot through he didn't scream at all, far from that he even recovered instantly, yet now his expression distorted in intense pain while shrieking.

In his eyes, there was not only agony but also strong bewilderment dwelling there. He was completely unable to understand the reason of how he was getting a damage that made him felt intense pain.

The two hands of Aruvheit that was cut away were rotating in the air from the recoil when they were cut. And then, at the next moment those arms raised *boba-* sound just like the apostles before and turned into small pieces, and then the pieces vanished just like that without leaving even dust behind.

"Wha, what is-. What is happening!? This is, just what in the world-"

"Aruvheit-sama. Please stand back. A really fine string….no, something like a chain is dancing in the air. It will cut anything it touched ignoring any defense and erased them."

“Wha, what did you say-“

If Hajime had that kind of stupidly powerful artifact like that then there was no way Ehito would overlook it, also, if Hajime had that, then it should be better if he used it when fighting Ehito…if that was the case, then why was that kind of thing only came out now that the situation had turned like this.

Aruvheit’s confusion was deeper than anything he had ever felt, his deadlocked mind caused his body to stiffen. He couldn’t find any answer, there was no way he could give any instruction, even reacting might be something out of his capability right now, he was merely opening his eyes wide, his mouth closed and opened wordlessly, for a god he looked really unsightly.

One of the apostles opened her mouth to further urge Aruvheit to step back toward the safe area.

“We, the apostles will face the irregular. Before more wound than this is inflicted on your honored person——”

“Hiih”

But, before the apostle could finish talking she was cut into centimeter sizes in front of Aruvheit and vanished too quickly. The abnormal scene of the prided ‘apostle of god’ created in Holy Precincts to get instantly killed like that made a pathetic scream to rise from Aruvheit unintentionally.

Even while that was happening, the apostles moved altogether and rushed at Hajime, they slipped through the red blood tornado and got cut by the superfine red chain running in the air, or they got entangled by the chain and like that they were annihilated as though they got disintegrated.

The chain with a diameter of one millimeter clad in blood red magic power——this was something Hajime transmuted into minuscule links from the stone floor (the stone floor used especially sturdy mineral as architecture material), he then covered the chain with magic power and then controlled it using ‘Remote Operation’.

At this time, perhaps from overwhelming hatred, rage, and possibly a sense of emptiness, Hajime was awakened to two derivative skill of transmutation. One of the skill, ‘Imagination Composition’ made Hajime able to use transmutation without needing a magic circle. That was also the reason of how regardless of the constant vigilance of the apostles holding down Hajime they were still taken by surprise.

But, if this was just merely a chain, then it shouldn’t be unable to do things like granting anguish at Aruvheit or surpassing the disintegration ability of the apostles and annihilated them.

The cause that brought about such cheat was…as clear as day.

Concept magic——’Deny All Existences’.

In this world where Yue was gone, he wouldn’t recognize the worth of the existence of every single thing. He wouldn’t tolerate anything for daring to exist. Anything and everything, all without exception…

——Disappear

Hajime who had Yue stolen from him felt bottomless fury and hatred, and then saturated with those emotions he reached an overwhelming sense of emptiness. This emptiness was the exact opposite of

the will of the utmost limit that was born from his longing to his birthplace when they created the crystal key. Be that as it may, this emptiness was without doubt a culmination of an emotion.

The result was literally was an ability of ‘erasing the existence of what is touched by the chain’ which even calling it atrocious was still too lukewarm to do it justice. With the power of ‘interference at the target’s information’ of sublimation magic as the base, this ability overwrote the information of the target that said ‘exist’ into ‘doesn’t exist’.

Riding the torrent of the magic power of ‘Supreme Break’, the chain circled at Hajime’s surrounding, it was just like an incarnation of ‘curse’ toward all living things.

The apostles and monsters even raised their war-cry as though to drive off the fear, horror, and despair, but even their strong spirit came to nothing, without any exception their existences were easily erased. The spectacle of those apostles helplessly vanishing like mist looked just like a joke.

The time it took until the apostles remaining in the audience hall were annihilated didn’t really take that long.

Also, the surviving several monsters ignored the order given to them by an age of god magic, they obeyed their instinct and tried to run away but…

Chain wrapped in red light meandered like a snake while flying, in an instant the chain was closing in and in an instant the monsters’ body was repeatedly cut to pieces before vanishing completely.

All those was done by just one person.

The face of Aruvheit who was left alone was twitching greatly while he was slowly drawing back.

(No way-. That power is dangerous! I have to tell this to my lord no matter how-)

Aruvheit endured the pain on his shoulders while attempting to escape from the hole in the ceiling. On the way, his gaze and magic power moved at Shia who was staring at Hajime with dumbfounded expression while she was still lying on the floor. It was for the sake of making her as a shield in a preparation of the worst case. Just like what he did to Myuu, he planned to crucify Shia in the air and carried her.

However,

“…Where are you planning to go?”

“-…”

That scheme was crushed by the sound of cutting wind and a voice that sounded like it was creeping from the earth. When Aruvheit strained his eyes, he could see that between he and Shia there was the superfine chain tearing the air like a wind blade going back and forth.

Aruvheit didn’t answer, he gave up picking Shia as a shield, then he fired flame sphere at Hajime as a smoke screen while leaping away.

But that too,

“You bastard-!”

At the ceiling hole, the chain had already been laid out in a grid shape, making an escape as something difficult. Aruvheit cursed out as though to distract himself from the unease that suddenly heightened inside him.

And then, this time he turned his gaze at the direction of Aiko and others. As expected he was surely thinking that hostage was necessary.

However, at the next moment chain stretched lightly to that direction too. Aruvheit unintentionally moved his gaze at Hajime, there, there was no trace of the flame sphere he fired or anything, Hajime who was standing still like a ghost at the center of the red tornado was fixing eyes of the abyss at him.

He shuddered, something crawled Aruvheit's spine.

"Do, don't screw with me-. You fools who opposed god! Something like the lives of you lowlifes is equal to trash——"

Perhaps to varnish his terror, Aruvheit suddenly yelled angrily and undulated the space. Most likely he was trying to release shockwave by directly affecting the space. Although he was below Ehito, as the retainer of god, doing something like handling age of god magic was easy.

But, it seemed that his chaotic head was unable to make a calm judgment.

Rather than raising his fervor like this, Aruvheit should escape from this place even if he had to blast the floor. Or perhaps he should resolve himself to receive damage to himself and fired annihilation class magic at all direction and used teleport in that opening, he also could summon the monsters that were still outside the devil king castle to buy time.

This dignity of a half-baked god had completely closed his one in a million chance path of survival.

The result.

"A? ——!!?"

He lost his four limbs.

This time it was both his legs that were erased. Aruvheit became a tumbling doll and fell down with a soundless shriek. With his body annihilated halfway like this, it seemed that he couldn't cut off his sense of pain using something like regeneration magic, and so he was driven mad by the 'pain' that he had already forgotten completely in these few thousand of years.

Even so, even when he was rotten to the core, he was still a god. He floated his body using magic and he attempted to escape with deathly desperation.

However, at this late there was no way Hajime would allow such thing, when Aruvheit noticed he was already locked inside a cage of chain that was wrapped with red light. There was already no place to escape anywhere…

The spherical cage was gradually tightening close. It was as though he was going to be annihilated bit by bit, and that instigated out his terror. Aruvheit was half panicked, he let out a cramped smile that sounded like a chicken.

“A, ah, wa, wait-. Wait a second! Sa, say what you want-. I’ll grant whatever your wish is! If you like I’ll even bring you to where Ehito-sama is! If I persuade Ehito-sama, surely even Ehito-sama will not refuse it out of hand-. The world-. The world you know! I will share the right to do whatever you please to the world to you too! That’s why-!”

All the people in the audience hall were staring dumbfounded at Hajime who was walking forward in swaying motion with nihilistic expression while clad in a red tornado, and Aruvheit who was desperately begging for his life under the guise of negotiation.

During that time, the spherical cage suddenly began to rotate. The countless chains that stretched vertically moved horizontally and began to turn like a ball that was twirled on someone’s finger. Thinking about the ability that rejected and annihilated the existence of what it touched, what was happening could even be said as a special excavator.

Because Aruvheit was a god, the sensation of physical pain was something that he had already forgotten completely since a long time ago. Therefore, what he felt from having all his four limbs cut off was a despairing agony to the degree that it was praiseworthy he hadn’t gone mad.

For that reason, the situation where an excavator made from annihilation chain gradually approaching him caused a tremendous terror that made him wanted to raise a meaningless shriek and an impulse to tear off his hair if he still had his hand. There shouldn’t be anything that can threaten himself in this world-. Yes, even if he screamed that in his heart, but the ‘presence of death’ at the other side of his forgotten memory was steadily and certainly creeping closer. The mind of Aruvheit was already on the verge of breaking down.

“Stop-, I told you to stop already! This is the command of god you know! Listen to what I’m saying-. No, wait, I got it! Then, I’ll become your, I’ll become your eminence’s servant! That’s why-. I’ll help with the recovery of that vampire’s body so-. Stop-. Just stoppp!”

Amidst the reverberating scream of terror and despair, the rotation of the cage of chain that was almost touching Aruvheit’s body suddenly weakened and it stopped growing smaller. Aruvheit who was in a state where the word unsightly perfectly suited him, timidly opened his closed eyes.

“You want to live?”

“eh, ah?”

“I’m asking whether you want to live.”

Aruvheit was dumbfounded at Hajime’s question, but then he comprehended the meaning of those words and a slight hope emerged in his eyes.

“Ye, yeah, I want to live-. I beg you! I’ll do anything-“

“I see…”

Hajime nodded briskly. Joyful look floated on Aruvheit’s face where he was thinking “I survived!”, but then Hajime sent him a gaze that was the same like before and opened his mouth.

“Then, die.”

“Eh? Hih, stop-, giiiiii, aAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-!!!”

The cage of chain that was purposefully shrinking slowly was shaving off Aruvheit’s body starting from the edge. At the same time, the shriek of death agony which was unbearable to be listened to was reverberating in the audience hall.

…A few seconds later, at the end of despair and agony, a god vanished from this world.

After Hajime saw off the fate of Aruvheit, his gaze moved at the sky that was visible from the hole in the ceiling. And then, his eyes quietly narrowed and he stepped so powerfully that the floor under his feet warped, then he flew out along with a surge of magic power that raised explosive sound.

“Haji, me-san!”

“Hajime-kun-“

Shia’s pained voice and Kaori’s fretful voice resounded.

Hajime had wound all over his body. Even though it was done by Yue’s slender arm but there was a hole opened in his stomach, on top of that he received magic that were in age of god class several times with his body. Not just his external wound, even with his internal organs there were only a few places where they were unharmed. If he didn’t receive treatment even for a second faster it would affect his life.

But Hajime ignored everything, with his gaze still filled with a sense of emptiness he aimed at the whirl of gold floating in the sky and leaped straight there.

The golden gate——the [Divine Gate] passed through by the devil race only had around a hundred-odd people who were still remaining behind. It seemed that the civilians also really went to the [Holy Precincts], so most of the people remaining were those who appeared to be the soldiers of devil race that served as the rear guard, but looking carefully there were also women and children, old men, people who seemed to be civilian mixing there.

“Wha, what-“

“That’s…”

They made a taken aback expression looking at the red tornado that suddenly flew out from the devil king castle. The rear guards devil race immediately launched magic. Flame bullets, wind blades, and ice spears of elementary level magic with nearly no chanting.

But there was no way such thing would work against the current Hajime, just by swinging the chain all the attacks were easily annihilated.

“Yo, you, stop-“

Several devils came to the front standing in his way. Hajime didn’t stop and advanced without even paying attention at the devils, as the result, in an instant several dozen devils on his route became small pieces without even being able to dodge and got dispersed to four directions.

While the other devils were in the middle of being dumbfounded witnessing the bizarre phenomenon of their compatriots getting annihilated, Hajime left them behind and charged toward the [Divine Gate].

However,

“-, aAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA-!!”

The [Divine Gate] only pulsed as though it rejected Hajime and didn’t open the path to the [Holy Precincts]. No matter how much he roared, how much he blew out magic power, no matter how many times he swung his fist and chain, Hajime couldn’t pass.

Hajime converged the chain of existence denial and decisively hurled himself like a lance thrust, even so, it was the [Divine Gate] itself that was dispersed instead.

Most likely it was adjusted so that only limited category of people who could pass through.

“Idiot-! Other than us the chosen people of devil race, there is no way other will be welcomed into the [Holy Precincts]!”

“Accept the divine punishment obediently, you heretic-!”

The devil races rushed at Hajime and launched magic with high power and sufficient chanting.

However, Hajime didn’t even pay such things any attention and repeated his suicide attack. He didn’t even defend satisfactorily so his back was hurt in the blink of an eye.

“OPEN THE WAAAAAYYYYY-!!!”

Hajime continued to ram his body like mad while roaring in earnest, causing the devils to make a somewhat overpowered expression. But, that too was changed into a rage by the happening right after that.

Because the [Divine Gate] was beginning to shrink.

“You bastard, because of you the gate is-“

“Hu, hurry-. Fly in before it got closed!”

The devils rushed into the [Divine Gate] in fluster. At the same time, they launched magic to remove Hajime who was a hindrance with an expression that was filled with rage.

The gigantic flame burned Hajime’s back. Even so, Hajime didn’t even notice and repeated his desperate charge to smash the [Divine Gate].

But, in the end his effort didn’t bear any fruit, in front of Hajime’s eyes the golden whirl was getting smaller, and before long it vanished with a poof.

“…”

The wordless and expressionless Hajime lowered his arms powerlessly with his head hanging down. In his eyes was nothingness as expected.

There the devils made an expression of despair and fury and assaulted Hajime. Along with curses, they attacked Hajime with countless high-class magic, but Hajime didn’t react at all. Naturally, Hajime who received direct hit of magic was blown far away.

Hajime fell down with white smoke rising. From him, there wasn't even any sign of him trying to take landing stance.

"Hajime-kun-!"

There Kaori with her silver wings flapping was calling Hajime's name while flying near. And then she caught Hajime in the air and then descended down toward the audience hall with teary eyes.

The devils that pursued Hajime driven by their rage saw Kaori's appearance, right away their expression turned as though they had found hope and they descended toward the audience hall after her.

"Hajime-kun, get a hold of yourself. Restrain your magic power quickly-"

"…"

Even when Kaori's voice that was blurred with uneasiness was resounding, Hajime didn't cancel his 'Supreme Break'. Even in normal time, concept magic that was invoked would consume a vast amount of magic power. And if on top of that someone also continued to use strength that was beyond their limit…it was a self-evident truth that the body would gradually break down because of the drying up magic power.

Looking at Hajime who only kept looking down, Kaori guessed that her words didn't reach and she gritted her teeth.

And, suddenly voices addressed at such Kaori.

"Apostle-sama! Aa, thank god. I thought just what is going to happen for a moment there."

"What? There are humans and demi-human? …Well, fine. Now, apostle-sama, let's slaughter this bunches and quickly head toward our god."

While Hajime was launching a suicide attack at the [Divine Gate], Shia and others were treated with healing magic by Kaori to some extent just in case. Now Shia and others were rushing toward Hajime, but hearing the dangerous statements of the devils they quickly put up their guard.

But, they didn't actually need to do that.

At the next instant, the devils who opened their mouth were divided into four and vanished just like that. Furthermore, there were twelve devils with outfit that looked like soldier descending on the audience hall, but due to the superfine chain they were annihilated without even any time to raise scream of death agony as though they had never existed since the very beginning.

Hajime who kept looking down was slowly raising his face. His gaze was directed at the devils who went stiff from the tragedy that happened right after they descended on the audience hall.

And then, the devils who were exposed to Hajime's empty gaze unconsciously raised short scream while trying to get back but——as expected, without any question, as though like a joke, they were cut into small pieces and vanished.

Hajime's blood colored magic power and chain imprisoned the remaining devils which were about seventy people including women, children, and old men into a cage that resembled an iron maiden.

And then,

——Die

That word was something small like a whisper. But, the devils could hear that voice, that curse, with certainty.

“A, apostle-sama! Please save us-“

An old devil wearing clothes of fine quality who appeared to be of quite high status implored so, that devil was covering an old woman with refined dress behind him, she was most likely his wife, while doing so he was looking for help at Kaori with a desperate voice.

Kaori sent her gaze at Hajime in bewilderment, and right after that,

“NOOOOOOOOO-!!”

A woman’s scream resounded. Taken aback, Kaori and others sent their gaze at the voice’s direction, there the old devil who asked for Kaori’s help had his neck cleanly removed. The thing that was rotating in the air should rather be left unsaid. And then it was slashed into pieces and vanished just before touching the ground.

“Ha, Hajime-kun!?”

Kaori called at Hajime with a voice that had shock and agitation mixed in it, but during that time the scream of the old woman disappeared. Along with her existence.

Further, a young woman at the side, a young man with scared expression, a youth who tried to counter attack, as though to make an example one of them, then one more of them was slashed into pieces and vanished. The devils’ agonizing cries reverberated in the room.

Everyone in that place stiffened and opened their eyes wide to look at Hajime who intended to slaughter even the devils who were obviously non-combatant.

“We, we surrender! That’s why, stop it already-. At least just the children-“

A man who seemed to be a father covered a child behind his back while making a surrender proclamation.

There were only about thirty devils remaining in the audience hall already. All of them followed the man’s proclamation and fell on both their knees with both their hands crossed behind their head.

All the remaining people didn’t look like a soldier. Including the children they were all civilians. Even if they were fanatics, but when it involved the life of children even they wouldn’t be able to pointlessly make suicidal resistance. Or possibly they were merely scared of Hajime’s nihilism that their fanaticism was blown away.

Like that, right after all the devils kneeled, the middle-aged man near the man who just proclaimed to surrender was severed vertically and dispersed like a display.

“!? Wh, why…”

Questioning voice of someone rose. Further, a woman at the side——someone who seemed to be the wife who was staring in a daze at the spot where the bisected man was standing, she was split vertically.

Something like surrender proclamation wouldn't stop Hajime.

It was natural. The culmination of emotion that Hajime was currently manifesting——that was 'Deny All Existences'.

For the current Hajime, at the very least at his own mind, everything in this world was equally worthless. Much less their worth as prisoner, even their very existence itself didn't have any worth, rather, just by existing they were an eyesore.

The figure of Hajime who was too merciless yet looked completely emotionless, that appearance made the devils trembled, they could only sink down on the floor with a despairing look.

Hajime's gaze, was directed at the side of the man who proclaimed surrender just now, at the trembling child there. Noticing that the man immediately covered the child inside his arms.

Shia, Kaori, Shizuku, Tio, Aiko, Liliana, immediately tried to stop Hajime.

But, there was someone who moved faster than all of them.

"Papa-, don't nano! Come back to the usual papa!"

It was Myuu.

Unnoticed by anyone, she barged in between Hajime and the hugging father and child. And then, she stood on the way with both her hands spread wide, tear was gathering at the corner of her eye, even so she was staring at Hajime with a straight gaze.

"…Move."

A voice without any emotion hit Myuu. Myuu twitched and her body trembled. Hajime's cold voice had never been directed at her even once until now. And then, his expression. The shock almost made her fell down just like that.

But, that was no good. As the daughter of her beloved papa, she couldn't lose her nerve here. To do something like leaving this kind of sad papa alone, was something she absolutely couldn't do!

Therefore, Myuu lifted her eyes decisively, and she made a smile on her lips. The person herself intended to mimic the fiercely glaring eyes and a fearless smile that Hajime showed in front of a powerful enemy, but her teary eyes and her warped lips that were just raised halfway only looked clumsy.

Even so, Shia and others who were beaten to the punch by Myuu's action understood really well, just who in the world she copied that expression from. That expression showed indomitability and persistence even in front of a desperate situation. There was not even one person who laughed at Myuu's expression right now. Rather, they swallowed their breath at that spirit.

"Myuu won't move nano! M, Myuu absolutely won't lose if it's against the current papa nano! Because, because"

"…"

Myuu desperately formed her words. Even the devils she protected gulped their saliva looking at the small girl challenging the terrible monster, just like a hero that came out in a tale.

"Myuu's papa, is not uncool like this nano! He is far, far cooler nano! He won't make eyes like that nano! His eyes look stronger nano!"

Myuu was scared. She was not scared at Hajime. At this rate, if Hajime kept rampaging with that kind of empty eye, she had the feeling that Hajime would go to a far away place that he wouldn't be able to come back from. She had the feeling that the papa that she loved, wouldn't return back for the second time.

Of course, there was also how it was difficult to endure the spectacle of the unresisting devils got killed. But, as expected it was only secondary compared to that.

Myuu glared back at Hajime's empty eyes that even Aruvheit avoided seeing straight from the front. Hajime's expression that didn't even twitch until now frowned a little.

"…I won't say for the third time. Mo——"

Even so, the emotion of the utmost limit that wished to erase everything let out cold words at Myuu.

However, this time Hajime was unable to say until finish.

"Hajime-kun. Just a bit, grit your teeth okay."

"——"

Bam! That was because Hajime's face was punched along with such sound of impact. His body floated in the air from the terrific force, and then he crashed on the floor.

The one who let out the punch at such Hajime was Kaori who was at the side. It was a straight punch with all the strength possessed by an apostle's physical strength. If it wasn't Hajime than the punch would blow away the head.

The impact that splendidly caught the jaw, combined with the accumulated damage, the limit that had been passed over since a long time ago, and then the weakening that was happening even now, caused even Hajime to be unable to stand up anytime soon.

To such Hajime, Kaori opened her mouth with an expression that was holding back anger.

"Cut it out and open your eyes already, Hajime-kun. Just how long you are planning to show that unsightly look?"

"-…"

"Venting your anger at Myuu-chan——at your own daughter, that's just the worst. If Yue see Hajime-kun right now, what is she going to say I wonder? Aah, but, I guess that's unrelated with Hajime-kun who has given up Yue."

Kaori's stabbing words opened wide the eyes of Hajime which were filled to the brim with emptiness. In those eyes, an obscure light of defiance toward the words of abandoning Yue was residing.

Kaori who accurately read the heart of such Hajime further formed her words.

"'Anything and everything disappear' was it? I heard it you know. Are you thinking that something like a world without Yue doesn't have any worth whatsoever? Doesn't the premise of that, is that you cannot meet Yue again isn't it? You have given up taking back Yue aren't you?"

"…"

The rampaging red tornado at Hajime's surrounding was decreasing in strength little by little. Light began to return into the eyes as though his sanity was recovering, at the same time the blood colored magic power was also gradually recovering its vividness.

"I'm going to save Yue you know. I'll absolutely take her back, without fail. …Hajime-kun, what are you going to do? Doing something like executing people that cannot fight one by one, is it fine to pointlessly passing the time like that? You really have given up? Can you give up?"

"…There is no way that's true."

The piercing words Kaori released certainly pierced through Hajime's cloudy mind, spreading purifying ripple inside. The words saturated his mind, his rampaging emotion was recovering its reasoning.

Then, Shia approached him at that timing. She stood at Hajime's side wordlessly, and then suddenly her fist dropped. *Gon!* Painful sounding sound resounded and Hajime's head shook.

"If it is to us, then it's fine even if Hajime-san showed something like your uncool side no matter how much…but only in front of Myuu-chan, Hajime-san has to be a cool papa and nothing else. To say nothing of how you make her that sad. A punishment is needed desu!"

"…Shia."

"Good grief, Hajime-san's love at Yue-san is too heavy. To cause a panic just from getting her stolen for a bit, your devotion is lacking!"

"…"

Fuhn-! Shia expressed her indignation with rough breathing. She too was also in a really dissatisfied state from the content of the concept that Hajime manifested. It was as though he was saying that if Yue was not there then even Shia and others were worthless.

Of course, currently Shia and others were unharmed like this was showing what was truly inside Hajime above all else. So even though she felt dissatisfied but she wasn't feeling shocked.

"For the time being, this art a punishment from me too."

"And this is from me."

"-…Tio, Yaegashi."

Further impacts landed on Hajime's head. Those were a tail attack from Tio and Shizuku's fist. Tio and Shizuku directed a wry smile at Hajime whose hand was pressing on his head.

"Nonetheless, even Goshujin-sama hath the time when thou lose thyself. It appeared thy sanity hath returned, it is fine with this much isn't it. It's unknown whether it was unconsciously or consciously, but even while being captive of an emotion so violent to the degree that it hath created a concept, in the end, from the beginning we, and also Myuu who was at the closest position art not harmed even by a single hair from Goshujin-sama."

"The result is only the enemies are defeated, and we are all saved."

Correct, although Hajime's reasoning was blown away from hatred and anger, and from the sense of emptiness by Yue's disappearance, the first thing he did was evacuating Myuu so that Myuu wouldn't be dragged into the attack that erased existence.

Even after that, he was wielding the chain freely in the battle against the apostles and demon beasts while his allies weren't hit at all, even when Aruvheit was trying to take Shia and others as hostage Hajime was preventing that with certainty.

Now Hajime's magic power had already returned to its usual vivid crimson, a light of reasoning was shining in his eyes. And then, regarding his rampage, Hajime's expression turned really awkward.

Kaori sat down in front of such Hajime. And then, she put Hajime's cheeks between both her hands and made him face her, in a complete change from before she talked to her with extremely gentle expression.

"Nothing has ended yet. Isn't that right?"

"…Yeah. Exactly."

"Hajime-kun, is not alone. We are here, above all even Yue is still here. Even if her body is separated from us, her heart is close right with us. Surely, even now she is fighting. In order to return to where Hajime-kun is. Because, it's Yue we are talking about. She won't lose to that kind of guy."

"…Yeah. It's just as you say. Sorry, everyone."

The atmosphere of Kaori who was gently embracing him made Hajime relaxed all at once and strength left his body. The magic power dispersed, the chain that had the concept magic filled in it became unable to endure the burden because its material was merely stone of building construction and it crumbled into pieces.

The dust of the Existence Denial chain dispersed, and then while focusing so that Kaori and others wouldn't be hurt by it, Hajime also apologized for running out of control with a bitter expression. Toward such Hajime, Kaori, Shia, Tio, and Shizuku, also Aiko and others too who were watching the sequence of events from a slight distance, they were convinced that Hajime had returned to how he usually was and their faces loosened with relieve and happiness.

There, a small silhouette was *sutetetete—* running closer. And then, without stopping the silhouette dove at Hajime's chest.

"Papaa———!!"

“Myu——gefuh!?”

It was rocket dive of happiness toward the papa who had returned to his senses. It splendidly hit Hajime’s stomach. Yes, right at the stomach where a wind hole was opened, at the mouth of a wound that was barely tightened close by the stomach muscle. And then, although the person was small, but the running body tackle of fifteen-kilogram mass presented a finishing blow at the worn-out internal organs.

“a, no good…”

The body that was already at its limit forcefully shutdown the consciousness as though it was protesting “Just cut it out!”. Due to the effect of canceling the ‘Supreme Break’, even more backlash attacked the weakening body, a severe sense of fatigue and agony tormented Hajime.

It appeared, the greatest punishment of this day came from Myuu. Her proclamation of ‘absolutely won’t lose if it’s against the current papa!’ seemed to be the truth.

“Nyuu? Papa? Papaaa——!! Open your eyes nano! You will die if you sleep nano!”

Straddling on top of Hajime whose eyes were turning round and round and fainted down, Myuu landed a double slap *pechin-pechin* unaware of the consequent damage she added. Hajime’s life point was already at minus.

“Wait, this is not the time to watch here! I forgot that Hajime-kun is heavily wounded!”

“Hiiiiii! Hajime-san is not breathing! His pulse is also losing…a, it stopped?”

“Kaorii! Hurryyy! Super hurryyyy! Quickly regeneration magic!”

“Thi, this is bad. Goshujin-sama’s life art like a candle lit in front of wind! It cannot be helped. Here I will ensure Goshujin-sama’s breathing with this so called mouth to mouth…” (TN: Here Tio said mouth to mouth with broken English)

“No, if it’s that I’ll do it. I have the experience of that being done to me.”

“Wait a second. Shia, Tio. So, something like that is better done b, by, by me who had learned first aid formally isn’t it?”

“Everyone you are noisy! I cannot concentrate here! If you all want to kiss then just attack him when he is sleeping after healing!”

“ “ “Yes…” “ “

In the audience hall, an atmosphere that was quite unclear whether it was an emergency or not was flowing.

“In the end, what should we do…”

Amidst such happening, the surviving devils’ perplexed voice was reverberating in vain.

Chapter 159 – An Agitator That is Even Nastier Than God

The sensation that felt like drifting at the bottom of dark water was gradually brightening. Faint light began to turn visible from behind closed eyelids, the ears that were soaked in silence began to catch noises.

“——Pa——don’t di——pa”

“Haji——”

“Open you——, Hajime——”

Multiple voices that seemed to feel desperate naturally shook Hajime’s consciousness. An awful sense of weariness made Hajime want to give an exaggerated cliché speech like “Five more years”, but he somehow swallowed back that impulse and awoke.

At the same time, the warmth enveloping his body was permeating gently to his core, it was sweeping away his weariness while producing vitality like a fuel poured into an engine.

Due to that, while feeling his consciousness rapidly surfacing, Hajime quietly opened his eyes.

Right away in his sight, there were several faces reflected in a circle like a roulette board. If a man of the world went through the same experience, he surely couldn’t help but to whisper “Aa, I’m dead. This place is heaven…” because of the beautiful women, beautiful girl, and beautiful little girl that lined up there.

“Papa!”

“Hajime-san!”

‘Hajime-kun!”

“Goshujin-sama!”

“Nagumo-kun!”

Myuu, Shia, Kaori, Tio, Shizuku, each of them called Hajime’s name with their respective way of calling along with a sigh of relieve. Without exception, at the corner of the girls’ eyes, something shining gathered. Surely, they were greatly worried.

“… aa. I made you all worry. My damage… Kaori huh. Thank you.”

“It’s fine. Something like that doesn’t matter. I’m really glad. Your heart even stopped for a moment there……hics, really, I’m really glad…”

“S, so my heart stopped. … That makes me, even more grateful.”

“Good grief desu. If it wasn’t Kaori-san, just what would happen there… really, Hajime-san was too reckless desu”

From the words of Kaori who was overcome with emotion and began to cry, Hajime guessed that he was quite in a pickle just now, with cramped cheeks he expressed his gratitude. To such a Hajime, Shia tightly hugged his one remaining arm while huffing in anger.

“… Really my bad. I’m not going to run wild anymore.”

“Papa, you are fine already?”

“Yeah. … Myuu too, I’m sorry. I showed you something uncool. Also, thanks. For stopping papa. Myuu, you are already far stronger than papa, huh.”

“Ehehe. Myuu is papa’s daughter nano~. That’s why that’s only obvious nano”

Myuu showed a really wide smile while pressing her face at Hajime’s chest and nuzzling there. It seemed that other than feeling proud, she was also feeling embarrassed from getting praised. Hajime used his right hand that was liberated by Shia and gently caressed Myuu’s head.

“Well, at any rate. The most important thing is that Goshujin-sama is safe. It’s vexing that I couldn’t do the ‘mouth to mouth’ though…”

“You, just what were you trying to do while I was wandering between the border of life and death…”

“…”

“Oi, Yaegashi. Why are you looking away with an awkward face?”

“No, nothing, it’s not like I wanted to kiss or a, ny, nything you know?”

Shizuku looked plenty agitated. Around the time when she spoke about kissing, it made it impossible already to even try to use artificial respiration as an excuse, but it seemed the person herself didn’t notice. Hajime spontaneously wanted to insert a tsukkomi there, “Where has the Yamato Nadeshiko gone?” like that.

Looking carefully, Shia and Kaori were also turning their gaze beyond, their worried faces just now had gone somewhere else.

It appeared that it ended only with an attempt, but it seemed that everyone had the feeling of wanting to attack Hajime in his sleep. Considering how Hajime awoke right after the healing, and the devils were still kneeling with perplexed expressions, it, fortunately, seemed like not much time had passed since Hajime lost consciousness.

Although, all in all, Hajime noticed how this joking atmosphere was purposefully created. By all rights, there should be one more person here, an important companion who usually emitted a sense of presence that no one could ignore should be here.

She wasn’t here——the one who was hurt by that fact wasn’t just Hajime. Even so, Shia and the others acted in their own capacity to be considerate to Hajime, so that his heart wouldn’t be lonely and break, they supported him with a clowning antic atmosphere like this.

(Really, this is just pathetic for me. This ‘me’ that was so hung up on Yue that I got supported by these girls, to give up everything by myself…)

Not just Hajime, even Yue, before at the Ice and Snow Cavern she was beaten into shape by Shia. Surely not just Shia, even Kaori, and others also supported and saved them.

This journey began only with the two of them at the bottom of the abyss with the resolve to turn the world into an enemy. But before they realized it, those that would try to protect monstrous people like them had gathered so many.

Coming here, Hajime strongly felt this obvious thing once again. The memory of bitter defeat was repainted by the smile of his reliable comrades. He quietly made a vow. He looked up to the sky and thought of his beloved who was waiting for him there.

Looking at such a Hajime who was making a hard to describe expression where pain and resolve were tangled with each other, Shia and the others immediately opened their mouths to call him…

However, as expected, the little girl with remarkable growth easily beat the lined up female camp to the punch.

“Papa, it’s fine nano.”

“Hm? Myuu?”

The sudden words made Hajime tilt his head, in contrast, Myuu showed a smile that looked a little bit like an ‘Onee-san’. That smile somehow made him feel déjà vu, yes…

(By any chance, is she, mimicking Yue?)

Before this, when she stepped forward into a dangerous ground in order to stop Hajime, Myuu mimicked Hajime and wrung out her courage. Inside the short but dense time that they spent together, Myuu obtained one kind of strength. But the thing that Myuu obtained wasn’t only from Hajime.

While the people themselves weren’t aware, it seemed that Myuu was absorbing various things from Yue who was always snuggling by Hajime’s side with her heart connected to him. It appeared that Myuu thought if it was for encouraging Hajime, then she just needed to be like ‘Yue-oneechan’!

Really, toward that encouragement from his gallant daughter, Hajime’s expression also slackened slowly.

But, Hajime was still underestimating Myuu. Myuu’s lexicon who had come this far looking at Hajime and the others didn’t seem to have the word of compromise or halfway. If you do something, do it thoroughly! As though to say that, Myuu sent a straightforward gaze and with that hand that was small like a maple leaf she propped up Hajime’s cheek.

And then…

“In place of Yue-oneechan, Myuu will make papa energetic nano!”

“No, Myuu, what are yoooou!?”

Hajime was still lying down so he couldn’t draw back, his hand was propped on Myuu’s back so he also couldn’t pin her down, Hajime who couldn’t stop her had his lips——corner (he barely averted his face) came into contact *muchuuu!* with Myuu’s lips. It was a childish kiss with her lips pointed like an octopus, but a kiss was a kiss.

“ “ “Aa~~~!!” “ “

“Hmm, far from just us, to even take Goshujin-sama by surprise… Myuu, what a terrifying child!”

The shriek of Shia, Kaori, and Shizuku and Tio’s off-point admiration resounded. Hajime didn’t see because he was closely surrounded by Shia and others, but Aiko and others seemed to be also right behind Shia and company making a crowd, as their screams were also raised. It went without saying just who was it that was screaming.

Due to the immediate evasion that he somehow performed, Hajime at least avoided the abnormal situation of becoming the partner of a young girl. Furthermore, it was his daughter’s first kiss, although for the people around it seemed that it didn’t really matter.

If looked from the side, it was a scene of Hajime getting pushed down by a little girl and then kissed with her all. It was understandable. What was fearsome was the reproduction ratio of Myuu’s imitation of Yue. Or else was it the eroticism of the vampire princess that often pushed down Hajime that Myuu could copy it…

But, at that time, in the hall that was displaying the hellish situation, a nonchalant voice resounded as though it didn’t read the situation or place.

“My my, well well. Even for my daughter, that is really bold. But you see, Myuu. Myuu is the daughter, that’s why you must not aim at the lips. Husband’s lips belong to mama, you know?”

“Just who is the ‘husband’ and what’s with that ‘belong to mama’ desu-! Please don’t slip into the confusing and act like a married couple!”

Unnoticed Remia had twisted in her body beside Shia and prattled such thing. Shia vigorously put her tsukkomi there.

Myuu who was wrenched away by a panicked Kaori pouted her lips in dissatisfaction. “No~! Myuu is doing chuu with papa nano! It’s at the mouth nano!” She threw a tantrum on top of Hajime.

From the classmates who gathered at slightly distanced spot something like “His poisonous fang even went to that kind of small child… Sex maniac demon king” or “… Lolicon” or “That kind of thing, with father and daughter… that’s too abnormal-“ or “Nagumo-san, that’s seriously screwed up –su” were audible, but Hajime didn’t hear anything at all, truly. He was making an expression that made even the devils shudder, but he said that he wasn’t bothered and so he wasn’t bothered.

Hajime pulled himself together and made a serious expression while raising his upper body. And then with his gaze, he somehow mentally conveyed about taking care of Myuu to Remia.

Eventually, Myuu would surely need some education. At this rate, she would grow into a high spec girl in various meanings imitating all of them, smiling fearlessly while picking a fight (TN: Shia, I think), normally acting innocent (TN: Shizuku), not forgetting to be gentle and considerate to others (TN: Kaori), but scattering charm everywhere on a whim (TN: Yue). Hajime wanted so that Myuu absolutely wouldn’t learn from the remaining person who was a matchless pervert.

Hajime shook his head as though to sweep away an unpleasant imagination, and then he suddenly performed transmutation and created a sword that looked like a katana from the stone floor.

It was slender and made from stone, but using compression transmutation it had high density and super heavyweight. Also, wind claw was enchanted on it so the surrounding of the blade looked to be faintly swaying, as a stone katana that was made improvised it possessed an abnormal intimidating air.

The eyes of Shia and the others turned around from Hajime's sudden act, and then Hajime's gaze turned to the devils which made them stiffen slightly in nervousness.

"Ha, Hajime-kun…"

Toward Kaori who called to him with a worried voice, Hajime stood up while sending her a glance. After that, he turned his gaze at Myuu who was staring fixedly at him from inside Remia's arms. Hajime shrugged his shoulders while lightly chuckling, implicitly conveying "It's fine".

There was no emptiness in Hajime's eyes, recognizing that he was drifting off his usual air of aloofness, Kaori and others sighed in relieve. Myuu also smiled widely.

Hajime confirmed that and turned on his heel, while everyone was watching him attentively, he stood up imposingly in front of the devils.

"Now then, I don't really have any expectation, but there is something that I must ask you guys. If you don't know then I don't mind, but I won't tolerate any falsehood or silence. Of course, it's your personal freedom to be stubborn… know that the compensation will be expensive. If the person beside you is important then be honest."

Hajime tapped the stone katana on his shoulder while threatening naturally. Behind him, he could hear someone among the classmates whispered "It's just like a thug…" but he ignored it.

"I, if we answer, will you let us live?"

"Aa? You think you are in a position where you can negotiate? Something like that is obviously depending on my mood. You better endeavor your best to rub your hands together with a smile while talking. We here got thoroughly aimed with killing intent by the devil race with that Freed at the top of the list. Right now, you should be bawling in tears and be grateful instead, just by me letting you all live like this."

From behind a whisper of "This is not really different from before, is it?" could be heard but Hajime ignored it.

Hajime opened his mouth while glaring at the surviving devils who went quiet.

"Spit out what you know regarding the Holy Precincts. Also, I remember you guys saying something like wanting Kaori… the apostle to open the Divine Gate, but can an apostle open the Divine Gate alone?"

That question was answered with hesitation by a devil who seemed to be the father who covered his child before this.

"Regarding the Holy Precincts, we only heard that it was a paradise for us, the devil race. If we can be welcomed there, we heard that we can become an even more excellent race. There is also something like prospering even more in the new land… I don't understand much about the Divine Gate. It's just, we only thought that perhaps if it's the apostle-sama, then she could do something somehow…"

“Aa? That’s all you got? You aren’t trying to trick me here, are you? Your faith and your child, what you can protect is just one between the two just so you know, eh.”

Hajime lightly slapped the stone katana on the cheek of the man. The young boy hugged by the man shrieked “hii” while sending Hajime a gaze of terror.

From behind a whisper of “No matter how you see it, that’s a yakuza…” was audible but Hajime beautifully ignored it. Further the whisper of “Papa, that’s so cool!” from Myuu and a shocked voice of “Eh!? It’s fine like that!?” were raised, but those too were masterfully ignored.

“It, it’s true! I, it’s not like that question tests my faith or anything so I don’t lie in this! Even more, this concerns my child’s life here! Really, other than this, I don’t know anything!”

“Chih, useless. What about the other?”

“N, no, anything, more than that is…”

“Me, me too…”

“Ple, please, at least only my child’s life-“

Hajime once more tapped his stone katana on his shoulder *tap tap* while his eyes narrowed in displeasure, it made the devils tremble with fear and beg for their lives. From behind a whisper of “No matter how you look, the villain is Nagumo…” was audible but it was godly ignored.

“Haa, can’t be helped huh. It’s different matter if it’s Freed’s aide or perhaps a soldier, but civilian is just that, yeah.”

Even while sighing deeply, Hajime didn’t look that discouraged. He then shook his head once and quietly narrowed his eyes. “No way, are we going to be cut down just like this!?” The devils thought that and their bodies twitched in shivers.

Red sparks ran around them. But, right after they imagined the worst, the stone floor around them transformed and became a cage in a few seconds.

“For the time being stay quiet there. If you think of something no good and get troublesome… you got it right?”

“Ye, yeah…”

Space magic was enchanted on the cage, fixing it in the space itself, it was impossible to escape from there with average strength. Making that cage to imprison the devils in other words also meant that they wouldn’t have even their lives taken. Understanding that, the devils sighed in relief, although their nervousness was still there.

The classmates too, although it was the devil race, they were glad that this ended without them needing to see the scene of scared children getting slaughtered before their eyes.

As for Hajime, although he had recovered his sanity, he had the thought to just cut down these devils who tried to kill Hajime and the others so they could go to Holy Precincts, but…

As expected, although eighty percent of it was that Hajime returned to his sanity, Myuu had also put her body at risk to protect them. Just simply killing them felt wrong. To say nothing of how in the middle of the drifting atmosphere of “There shouldn’t be any slaughtering of unresisting people anymore… there won’t be any right?”, if he said something like “Eh? I’m going to normally massacre them but, is there any problem?” and carried it out… undoubtedly the atmosphere would die. Surely it would become an incomparably unbearable atmosphere there.

And so, with the intention of quickly lopping off their necks if they made any stupid movements, for the time being, Hajime put the matter regarding the treatment to the devils on hold.

Hajime turned his back to the imprisoned devils and returned to Shia and the others. And then, he performed a transmutation that was the most conspicuous from everything until now and in the blink of an eye, he created a table and chairs according to the number of people.

“For the time being, all of you sit down. Let’s talk about the matter from here on.”

Shia and the others nodded powerfully at those words while the classmates were taking their breaths with bewilderment.

By the way, there were two table sets. The side where Hajime, Shia, Kaori, Tio, Shizuku, Suzu, Ryutaro, then Aiko, Liliana, Remia, and Myuu gathered. The classmates other than those people were at the other. Although Myuu was throwing a tantrum that it was better to be on Hajime’s lap, Remia who read the atmosphere held Myuu in her arms.

Putting aside the displeased Myuu, Hajime looked over all present with a serious gaze and opened his mouth.

“First, sorting the information. The god that introduced himself as Ehito took over Yue’s body, but, if Ehito’s words are true then to completely grasp that body at the very least will take three days.”

Once Hajime cut off his words, everyone made a pained expression. Everyone understood well just how much Hajime treasured Yue coupled with his rampage just now, so they couldn’t help but sympathize with him.

Although, Shia and Kaori, Tio, and then Shizuku were returning strong gazes that didn’t shake for even a bit.

Inside the girls’ minds, the recovery of Yue was already determined fact. They believed that they would take her back without fail. That was why there was no reason to be gloomy or behave seriously. The joking conversation and frivolous talk from before this were also mostly displaying that attitude.

Shia continued after Hajime’s words.

“To take back Yue-san, we have to go to this Holy precinct they mentioned, is it? But, that golden gate didn’t let Hajime-san pass. If the people who can pass through are limited by Ehito, then a different plan is necessary desu.”

“You’re right. … We needed either obtaining a different method to go to the Holy Precincts, or possibly a method that can break through the Divine Gate that is expected to manifest at the large invasion three days later.”

“Hmm, as for the method to go directly… Goshujin-sama. As expected, the crystal key…”

Tio asked Hajime. To that, Hajime sighed deeply while shaking his head.

“No good. It was together in the treasure warehouse. Indeed, if we have that it will be surely possible to directly ride into the Holy Precincts but… without Yue, at best, perhaps I can make a degraded version of it.”

Aiko and the others who didn’t know about crystal key tilted their head, so Shizuku who was at Aiko’s side explained with a pained look. Actually, Hajime had already obtained the method to return to earth. Aiko and the classmates who were told that quieted down, a moment later the audience hall was filled with shocked voices.

“You guys are noisy. Either way, it was destroyed so there is no meaning. Don’t make a fuss.”

“But, but, even though perhaps we can finally go home…”

“That’s right! Can’t you make it one more time somehow!?”

“I beg you, Nagumo! Show us your guts!”

Sonobe, Imura, and Tamai sent Hajime pleading words. The other classmates also made a loud ruckus while sending Hajime imploring gazes.

The gaze of Hajime who scowled in irritation went toward the table of the classmates in strain. Aiko who got a really bad premonition let out a scolding in panic.

“Everyone, be quiet! Please don’t make a fuss! Calm down!”

“Bu, but Aiko-chan-sensei…”

Toward Aiko who was hopping up and down while remonstrating them, the students quieted down for the moment. Even so, the students who were in the mental state like a horse that had a carrot dangled in front of their eyes were mumbling their mouth wanting to say something.

Aiko talked toward them who were like that in a very kind and detailed way.

“Listen well, everyone. Sensei really understand how you all are feeling, but please listen to Nagumo-kun’s words calmly. The artifact for going home was already lost, to make that one more time, Yue-san’s power is necessary. Even if all of you make a fuss here, that truth won’t change.”

“However, the possibility that Nagumo is lying because he prioritizes taking back the girl is…”

“Nagumo-kun won’t lie like that! … He won’t. … He won’t, you know? … He will… … not won’t you?”

For some reason, after Aiko strongly objected, she was gradually losing momentum and directed a troubled gaze at Hajime. As might be expected from someone who had been made to experience various things using the name of the ‘Goddess of Harvest’, Aiko noticed that she couldn’t declare that Hajime wouldn’t lie in the middle and her confidence was gone.

Hajime in his heart gripped ‘Keep pushing through right there!’ to Aiko, but it was also him reaping what he sowed, so Hajime stopped with only making a scowl. Hajime let out merciless words at the

classmates who were not in a calm state from the sudden good news and the disappointment that followed right after.

“I’m not lying, I guess. Either way, I don’t have any intention to waste my time just so you guys can go home. After this, I will focus all my strength in taking back Yue after all. Going home is secondary.”

‘No way-!’ The classmates began to clamor once more, but Hajime’s ‘Coercion’ that he released forcefully shut them up while he spoke out the words that made them reconfirm the current situation.

“Besides, you lot, if you can go home right away then what are you going to do afterward, huh? If the shitty god isn’t murdered, his next target is earth, you know? That’s just meaningless.”

“Uu, now that you say that…”

“Certainly, he said something like that…”

“Damn it all… just leave us alone already.”

Hajime’s words made the classmates covered their face, falling prostrated on the table, or grieving. Giving a glance at them who were like that, Hajime brought the talk back on track.

“And so. Returning to the talk, if it is with a degraded version of the crystal key perhaps it’s possible to break through that Divine Gate. It’s vexing but… there is nothing to do but wait until the large invasion three days from now when the apostles reappear.”

“it will be easier if Ehito is worried when Aruvheit doesn’t come back and he come out himself from the other side, though…”

Kaori murmured that, but the possibility seemed low. Ehito most likely wouldn’t come out until he became able to completely control the body, and the time that he was able to do that would be the time of the large invasion. In that case, it didn’t change that it would be the other side who came and this side who had to go to them.

“… Before talking about that, can we win, I wonder?”

The one who murmured that was Suzu. She was looking down and a thick shadow covered her face. Surely, she was remembering when they were unable to do any single thing when facing Ehito.

Everyone made a complicated expression. In the middle of that, it was Hajime who easily answered.

“We’ll win.”

Suzu objected at that light tone with a slightly sullen expression.

“… even though you couldn’t do anything towards him?”

“Yeah. Even so, I’ll win the next time.”

“How, can you say that-! He can do anything to us just with a word, his magic is powerful without compare. To make matters worse, the apostles, Freed, monsters… and Eri… even Kouki-kun are on the other side… that guy is genuinely a monster, you know?”

It appeared Suzu's heart was almost breaking a little bit. Eri who she wished to be reunited with didn't listen to her at all. Far from that, she was thrown into confusion easily and unable to do anything. Actually, the monsters that she summoned using the simple gate in the middle of battle were also instantly killed by the apostles.

Although it couldn't be denied that she was still not used to metamorphosis magic, even the age of god magic that she finally obtained with great pain ended up as nothing. Suzu was gritting her teeth from her powerlessness.

And then above all, the illusion that Ehito put her into——at that time, Suzu and the others tasted the sensation of being torn into pieces within an instant that felt so real they mistook it for reality. Their hands and legs severed with blood spraying everywhere, and while they tumbled down and fell down, their upper body and lower body separated, their shoulders fell, and last their neck went flying.

The sensation of an invisible sword caressing from outside to inside, even now Suzu could remember it. She remembered it clearly. Ryuutaro and Shizuku were also the same. They patted their necks and limbs with expressions of discomfort. They also didn't have any sensation in their own limbs for a while. Amidst such a situation, the mental strength of Shizuku who went as far as undoing her binding curse and recovered her movement to fight was worthy of praise.

But, for Suzu, remembering the fear she felt of being dead while alive was something that was hard to endure. Just from thinking that she might be made to feel that one more time made her body naturally wither.

Hajime said without even any care to such a Suzu.

"So what?"

"Eh?"

Suzu reflexively looked up. Hajime continued.

"The opponent is a monster? We are outnumbered? Will something like that become any kind of obstacle?"

"Yo, you ask if it will become an obstacle… of course it…"

"Do you forget? When I was called incompetent by you guys, I fell into the abyss and crawled up until here, you know?"

"Aa…"

Suzu was spontaneously befuddled. The classmates who looked down with an expression of despair thinking there was no way they could win against god also raised their faces.

"There was nobody helping, there was also no food. The surrounding was teeming with monsters. What's more, I also got no talent with magic, even my left hand was gone… But, I survived."

The audience hall became as still as death. Everyone was naturally listening closely to Hajime's words.

“This is the same thing. Whether the opponent is a god or his army, doesn’t matter… Right now, I’m alive. That guy missed his chance to kill me. In addition, he also gave us the information himself.”

Hajime’s eyes were shining fiercely, blazing with killing intent. The corner of his mouth was lifted up, his canine was bared as though he was going to bite his enemy to death. That savage appearance that made anyone hallucinate a wild wolf aiming for its prey. A sound of someone gulping their saliva resounded.

“I’ll steal Yue back, and kill that guy. It’s time to change the attacker and defensive sides. I am the hunter, that guy is the prey. I’ll chase him until the end of the world and make him raise a scream of death and agony. I’ll teach that self-proclaimed god who believed without a doubt that he was special, just who is the monster here.”

Hajime sent his gaze that was still fiercely glaring at Suzu. Then, Hajime asked Suzu who for some reason blushing even while trembling.

“Taniguchi. If you said that it’s impossible already for you then close your eyes and plug your ears. I’ll make all these ends, everything.”

Those words weren’t Hajime’s consideration for Suzu. It was the reverse. Those words were testing Suzu. Those words asked her whether it was fine if it ended like this. Where she still couldn’t say what she wanted to say satisfactorily. Where the other party still didn’t even look at her. If Suzu said that she was fine with that, then while she was closing her eyes and plugging her ears, everything——including dealing with Eri, would be finished by Hajime.

Saying it in reverse, as long as Suzu was still standing up then Hajime would let her do as she pleased about the matter of Eri.

Hajime’s gaze was also further directed at Ryuutaro and Shizuku.

Both of them noticed the implicit words filled in that gaze. Namely, whether they would leave the matter of Kouki to Hajime, or would they do something themselves. Those choices were entrusted to them. Naturally, in case they left it to Hajime, there was only the one choice of obliteration. That too was also clearly conveyed to the two.

There was silence for a while. Hajime’s severe words and atmosphere made the classmates lose their words. If there were people who shrunk back in fear from that, then there were also people who directed sparkling bright gazes or people who stared with blushing cheeks, or people whose expression turned into a face that concealed some kind of determination.

Among them, the first one who opened her mouth was Suzu. With a gloomy and weak atmosphere until just now blown away, she stared back straight at Hajime with a determined look.

“That’s unnecessary you know, Nagumo-kun. Leave the matter of Eri and also Kouki to Suzu. Because I’ll walk to where they are whether it’s the Holy Precincts or where ever!”

While emitting the air of the usual mood she made, Suzu grinned fearlessly.

As though getting triggered by such girl, the quiet Ryuutaro raised a roar.

“DAAAAAAAAA-! Yosh-, I have enough acting wishy-washy like this! I ain’t gonna let only Nagumo and Suzu be the one that keeps acting cool! I’m gonna beat up that stupid idiot Kouki and make him return to his senses, yeah!”

Ryuutaro punched his fist in his other hand’s palm in front of his chest and made a similar fearless smile. It seemed that this muscle brain was actually also plainly feeling down. His best friend was turned to the enemy side, and when even Suzu showed a slight resistance, he himself was unable to resist the binding curse and the illusion. He lost his confidence feeling that he was worthless, but now it seemed he was already fine.

Looking at that, Shizuku “Fufufu” chuckled.

“I guess. That idiot Kouki needs to be punished hard, not just hard but really haa~rd, also my feeling won’t be cleared without knocking down that irritating grin on Eri… Be, besides, if it’s the place where Nagumo-kun is going, I intend to follow no matter where it is… not just now, but from here on too, okay…”

Looking at Shizuku who was saying that kind of thing while stealing glances at Hajime with blushing cheeks, the classmates sent her a suspecting glance. They didn’t know about Shizuku’s feeling, so they never even in their wildest imagination thought that even Shizuku who was one of the two great beauties of their class would be felled.

No, it seemed that with Nagayama’s party and Sonobe’s group of Ai-chan protection squad as first in the list, several students——especially the girl students had sensitively guessed it. And then, after they alternately stared at Shizuku and Hajime with a little surprise, they then nodded as though in comprehension of something.

A part of the girls went “It’s Don Juan. He is the Don Juan of the modern times. … Nagumo-kun is just too dreadfulll” with blushing cheeks while sending glancing looks at Hajime, but right now was a serious time so Hajime ignored it. (EN: Hajime’s ignore has become the 8th God’s Age Magic)

“I see. Then the one that will enter into the Holy Precincts will be us and Taniguchi, then Sakagami… well. It’s just the usual members recent, I guess. If Amanogawa comes out at the other side then you guys do as you like. However… I’m not going to allow any halfhearted effort.”

“Yep, thank you Nagumo-kun.”

“Thanks, Nagumo.”

Suzu and Ryuutaro said their thanks cheerfully. Hajime waved his hand lazily to tell them to not mind it while moving on to the next talk. But, there Liliana called for a halt.

“Sa, say~, Nagumo-san, can I speak for a bit?”

“Hm? What is it, princess.”

“You see. At the time of the great invasion, Hajime-san, and the others, the strongest battle force will ride into the Holy Precincts, while all of you are there, what should the capital who receives the attack… if Ehito-sama’s words are correct then they will come from the God Mountain as the origin, right?

Thinking about the strength of the apostle, it's unthinkable that even the great barrier will be able to hold out for long… is there something, a way to temporarily seal the Divine Gate?"

It was a natural worry for a princess of Hairihi Kingdom. If the apostle's disintegration ability was used in full, even the great barrier wouldn't hold out for long. To say nothing of fighting the apostle honestly from the front, the only one who could do that was someone like Hajime. It was unknown how long it would take until Hajime and others could beat Ehito, but during that time it was clear as day that at the very least a great number of people would be slaughtered.

Hajime who was looked at with pleading gaze nodded once.

"I was thinking to talk about that now."

"And what do you have to say?"

"I cannot stomach that Ehito. That's why, from here on, I'm not going to let anything, not a single thing, go according to that guy's plan. I don't care what will happen to the people of this world but… nevertheless, it's extremely unpleasant if I let that guy laugh loudly in his dying moments thinking of all the people he slaughtered. That's why, whether it is his apostles or underlings, Freed or all those monsters, wholesale slaughter is on the menu for all of them. Everything that guy has, even his expectation that he has, I'll wreck them all thoroughly to the root and branch."

'Ku-ku-ku' Looking at Hajime who was actually chuckling with a crooked face made the classmates draw back. Even Liliana who asked him was making a cramped face. Although, as expected, there were some of the girls who were staring at Hajime with red cheeks and heated expressions.

"E, err, in other words, are you saying that you will be able to do something about the invading large army of apostles?"

"Let's see. Putting aside the detail of the concrete method for later. For now, what I'm thinking is to freely share my artifacts. I'll super strengthen the common soldiers, adventurers, and the mercenaries. I'll equip everyone with a weapon, I also planned to implement anti-aircraft weapons. We only have three days so it will be severe, but about that, you guys will also cooperate, right?"

When Hajime looked around, powerful nods were returned conveying that naturally, they would cooperate. Unexpectedly, even several of the students whose hearts had broken and withdrew from battle also sent him powerful gazes. Perhaps they were provoked by Hajime's strong fighting spirit.

Liliana closed her eyes while pondering. After a beat, she opened her mouth.

"I think there will be pandemonium from the apostle's attack, but fortunately, when we were kidnapped they were only focusing on that so there should not be that much damage to the soldiers and knights. However, even so, I think there is a limit of the battle strength that we can mobilize within three days. Whether they will be enough against the mighty apostle as the opponent or not is… in addition, even for argument's sake we can gather the number, can Nagumo-san prepare powerful artifacts that can even oppose the apostle in that many numbers?"

"Yeah, I can. About the number of people, we will use the gate and gather them from various places. For that sake, while I'm preparing the artifacts, you guys have to fly around the world to all the places."

“Gate, is it? Goshujin-sama. Weren’t all the artifacts hath been destroyed already?”

Tio tilted her head while asking. Certainly, the key hole type artifact ‘Gate Hole’ was installed all over the world so they were safe, but the essential key type artifact ‘Gate Key’ to open the gate was stored inside the ‘Treasure Warehouse’, so it was supposed to be destroyed together.

Indeed, if they could use a gate then it would be easy to gather battle forces from all over the world within three days, but…

“Actually, things like items that cannot be replaced or several important things, before we passed through the gate at the border of Shunee snow field, I transferred them behind, inside the ground.”

“What! Then, the gate key too?”

“Yeah. In case something happened, so that Myuu and others can escape I brought the crystal key that can be used effectively here but that backfired, but… items like the compass, the proof of dungeon conquer, and the remaining god water… of course, the gate key too should be buried there. Ah, also, Kaori’s former body too. It’s underground so it must be relatively cold, I think it will be okay but… if we don’t dig it out quickly the ice will melt and it will turn into a grave.”

“Re, retrieve it-! If we don’t hurry to retrieve it-! My body will…”

When Hajime talked about Kaori’s former body, everyone’s expression turned into realization. If Hajime didn’t prepare for the unexpected situation, right about now Kaori’s body would be dust. It was a fine play from Hajime.

Although, Kaori couldn’t help but become fretful when the grave was mentioned. Hajime stroked the flustered Kaori to calm her down.

“I see, I understand well. … However, there is one more problem. As expected, if we speak that the world might end three days later, just how many people will believe that and gather… to say nothing of how what we will fight the apostles. In the worst case, there is the possibility that we will be the bad guys…”

Liliana was making a complicated expression while pointing out even more issues. But, it seemed that in regard to those too, Hajime happened to have the answer in hand.

“Regarding that, I think we can manage somehow. We will have Kaori or Tio to use regeneration magic.”

“Regeneration… magic?”

Liliana tilted her head. In contrast, Kaori guessed what Hajime wanted to say and clapped her hand.

“You mean ‘regenerating’ the scene of the past isn’t it? Just like what we experienced at the great labyrinth of Merujiine.”

“That’s right. Regenerate of what happened here and preserve it in an artifact for image recording. Then show it to the upper brass of every place. The guys that we had met and talked with until now… Catherine of Brook, Iruwa of Fuhren, Roa of Holuad, Ranzi of Ankaji, Alfrerick of Fea Belgen, Gahard of the empire, if it’s those guys then they won’t doubt us. It will be easy to gather the battle force.”

Naturally, princess Liliana of the kingdom and the guild master of the adventurer guild were also included. Even in this world, they were all key people with power.

Despite saying that he had no interest in the people of this world, he had an extravagant line-up of connections. While feeling dizzy at the mentioned names who she knew were quite the big shots, Liliana thought that indeed if it was those members, then they would surely treat this seriously.

“Next is… that’s right. It’s better if we also use sensei to give incitement.”

“Ee!? M, me!? No, wait, incitement!?”

Aiko who suddenly had the talk turned to her trembled. Toward such an Aiko, Hajime raised his voice loudly.

“Now, stand up everybody! We will smash the ambition of the evil fake Ehito who dared to falsify himself as the virtuous Ehito-sama and manipulate fake apostles, who right now is about to trample this world! Fight together with this messenger of god, the ‘Goddess of Harvest’! Something like that. Do your best.”

“Do your best, that’s not it! Just what is with that speech! How can you say those kinds of words so smoothly… it’s Nagumo-kun who is the great agitator here.”

“Don’t mind the little thing here sensei. The seed we sprinkled is almost blooming. Then isn’t it fine if we water and grow it up, and then harvest all the yummy crops? As might be expected from a farmer.”

“Just who was the one who did all that…”

Aiko stared fixedly at Hajime with an exasperated face. It was also like this in the town of Ur, Aiko was convinced that Hajime absolutely possessed the talent of an agitator.

It seemed that the classmates were also of the same opinion. They somehow got the vision of Hajime in front of stars dangling manipulating string down while chuckling with a cool pose, “Eh? Isn’t this the same like Ehito?” they were tilting their heads pondering. Though several of the girls were whispering “Nagumo… no, Hajime-sama…” with red cheeks, but here they must return to their sanity immediately.

Hajime smiled wryly at Aiko who although she realized that the method was effective and understood that this had to be done, but for some reason, she wasn’t fully accepting it.

“This is a battle that will become an all out war of humanity. Even if the battle force is gathered but a mere disorderly crowd will be meaningless. A powerful leader is necessary. And someone like a king of a country will be insufficient for that. The only one who can do this is just Aiko-sensei. Really please.”

“…”

Hajime’s words made Aiko twitched for a moment. Since a while ago she kept trembling. It was as though she was a small animal. And then such an Aiko who was like a small animal, for some reason she began to send glancing looks at Hajime while fidgeting. And then, she timidly asked the doubtful Hajime.

“Na, Nagumo-kun. Just now, at the end there, what did you say?”

“Hm? Really please…”

“N, no, not that…..about me, you called me, A, Aiko-sensei weren’t you?”

“… Is there, any problem?”

“N, no. Nagumo-kun, usually you only call me ‘sensei’ so…”

“Is that so?”

Hajime tilted his head. Aiko was fidgety, or rather she was being bashful while she opened her mouth with looking up eyes.

“You did. … That… can you, say that just now, one more time?”

“… Just now, about the last bit?”

“Yes. However, this time, say it without ‘sensei’…”

Hajime’s cheeks were cramping. At the same time, the small animal who kept glancing at him with an upward glance while blushing at the opposite seat made him wanted to put a tsukkomi whether she understood her own standpoint and the surrounding situation.

Aiko’s ‘coaxing’ made the classmates to make a fuss. “Eh, what is this?” or “What, this atmosphere…” or “I, it’s a lie right…” or “Hajime-sama… as expected” Murmurs like those could be heard. Incidentally, the sound of grinding teeth was resounding from the lot of Ai-chan protection squad.

Perhaps because of nervousness, but the voice of the surrounding didn’t reach Aiko. If she was speaking like this understanding everything… then how terrifying that was. That was because Ai-chan had thrown to the winds various things to charge until this far. Doing something like abandoning her teacher self had the risk of collapsing her identity. Hajime could only pray that she wasn’t acting like this while knowing that it should not be.

However it was also a problem for her to lose strength just before the final battle, having said that, it didn’t seem like any deception would work on the current Aiko who was running wild. Even when he sent his gaze at Shia, Kaori, and Shizuku, everyone was only smiling wryly and didn’t send him any lifeboat. He wished that they wouldn’t sympathize with the complicated heart of a maiden at this kind of time.

Hajime was sighing deeply, in the middle of the gathering piercing attention, he resolved himself and opened his mouth.

“… Aiko, please.”

“-!! Yes! Leave it to me! I’m going to incite them like mad! This is the time for a teacher of social study to show her real ability!”

Was incitement the real ability of a social study teacher… he wanted her to apologize to all the social study teachers in the country. Hajime once again sighed while taking off his gaze from Aiko who was absurdly in high spirit.

Toward his ears, “Te, teacher and student… is this ero game-“ or ‘A, Aiko-chan got the poisonous fang of the demon king…” or “Casanova… the guy there is a Casanova! You mustn’t meet his eyes! You will get pregnant!” those murmurs could be heard. The twitching of Hajime’s cheeks couldn’t be stopped.

“Co, cough-! Na, Nagumo-san… I, I will work hard too!”

For some reason, Liliana raised her voice. Her cheeks were dyed bright red, her almond shaped eyes were shining in sparkles with some kind of expectation.

“… Yeah, do your best, princess.”

“… I will work hard!”

“Yeah.”

“I will work hard!”

“…”

“I will work hard!”

“…”

“I, I will work, hard, hics-“

“… … … … … …Please, Liliana.”

“… Lily.”

“Guu… please, Lily.”

“Yes! You can rely on me! Please look at the influence and popularity of a princess! The likes of the masses will be beaten hand down!”

He got the feeling that something a princess absolutely must not say had been said somehow, but surely it was just his imagination. The princess-sama who was always loved by the masses should not be thinking of something like ‘it’s so easy to manipulate the mass huh’.

The clamor of the classmates knew no end. The eyes looking at Hajime were already becoming gaze filled with awe or gaze containing strange heat. Perhaps it could be said that these gazes were even more emotional than the one directed at Ehito or Aruvheit.

“… Haa. Let’s conclude this.”

Hajime let out a sigh and then he looked around at everyone, changing the atmosphere stiffly in one breath. Hajime went on with Aiko and Liliana’s words and tolerated the mood of his classmates, were also with the intention of softening the atmosphere somewhat.

With the danger to the world approaching, to say nothing of the danger that was threatening even their birthplace, Earth too, there was nobody here that wasn’t feeling the mental burden. So that none of the classmates would run wild from pessimism, Hajime regulated the atmosphere so that it wouldn’t be too tense.

Hajime's serious expression changed the soft atmosphere into one with nervousness in one go. Aiko and Liliana were also properly changing their atmospheres to the degree that made anybody wonder just where the embarrassing or sweet air they had been exposing until now had gone to. This attitude in this aspect was truly as expected from a teacher and a princess.

Surely their 'coaxing' was something from their heart, but if the atmosphere was tensed like this from the start then they undoubtedly wouldn't say such things. Looked like they were reading the mood sensitively. Although it was unknown whether they were doing it intentionally or unintentionally.

The classmates were also lured by that, even while their bodies were quite relaxed, they also seemed able to feel the tension.

Hajime confirmed that and opened his mouth.

"The objective that I prioritize most is taking back Yue. In order to do that at the great invasion three days from now, I will go through the Divine Gate that we think will be open at that time and enter the Holy Precincts. Regarding Nakamura and Amanogawa, I leave them to Taniguchi and others. What's left is the interception of the invading apostles."

Hajime stopped talking for once and confirmed whether they understood. Everyone strongly nodded, so judging that, there was no problem, Hajime continued his words.

"I'm telling you the plans from now until three days later. First, I plan to head to the deepest part of Orcus. To mass produce artifacts, the environment of Orcus is the most optimum, after all. For this, I want Kaori, Myuu, and Remia to come along as helpers."

"Yes, got it Hajime-kun."

"Yes, nano! Myuu will help nano!"

"Please say anything about what I can do."

Kaori, Myuu, and Remia gave back a pleasant reply. Hajime put Myuu and Lemia at his side was in preparation in the unlikely event so that they wouldn't be taken hostage again, but he also had the intention to make them take care of his needs (EN: Giggity) while he was concentrating in mining and transmuting, so his reason also wasn't just something on the surface.

Hajime nodded back at Kaori and the rest, then this time he moved his gaze to Shia.

"Shia, you go to Raisen great labyrinth."

"… I see. I will ask for Miledy's cooperation, am I?"

"Correct. If she has the information about Ehito or the Holy Precincts even just for a little, then that's a good deal already. That time we were forcefully ejected so it's unknown whether there is a shortcut or not. At least we got the proof of conquering, but if it doesn't react at the spring at Brook's outskirts, then you have to go through inside the labyrinth again."

"I think that perhaps, she will let me pass but… even if it's no good, this time I swear I'll clear the labyrinth in half a day. If it's the current me, that great labyrinth is no different than a playground."

“I also think so. I’ll leave it to you.”

“Yes desu!”

Hajime smiled at Shia who nodded energetically. Next, Hajime called to Tio.

“Tio.”

“Yes. I understand. Goshujin-sama is asking me to return home, correct?”

“As expected. If there is a danger to the world, then the law of dragon race also doesn’t matter. Even if they aren’t as strong as Tio, if the strength of the dragon race is added with my artifacts, they should be able to fight even the apostles.”

“I think so. As expected, there is no choice for the dragon race to not move in this situation. Let me guarantee their strength too. However, the hidden village is… quite far. Truly accomplishing it within three days is not possible…”

“About that, let’s manage it somehow using the artifact.”

Hajime was rearranging the order of priority in his head while moving his gaze further.

“Yaegashi, you go to the empire. The same like the Hairihi Kingdom, it’s possible to go there using the gate, I’ll duplicate the gate key to go to the kingdom before you depart after persuading Gahard to send the battle force to the kingdom.”

“That’s… fine but, why am I the one going?”

“That’s because Yaegashi is Gahard’s favorite. Just to be sure, I’m taking into account so that the talk will be smooth. After all, there must be some people there that hold a grudge from the case with the restriction choker. Thinking about the negotiating ability and battle strength, there is no one else I can leave this to.”

“Mu. I understand that, more or less, but… you know my feeling, yet you send me at the place of a man wooing me, that’s a little shocking. Well, I understand that this is not the time to say that kind of thing so it’s fine but…”

“… My bad. If Gahard screws around then just give my name. Say that if he tried wooing Yaegashi Shizuku, then Nagumo Hajime won’t stay quiet.”

“-… Su, a surprise attack is cowardly.”

Shizuku slightly blushed while conveying her consent.

“The students and Liliana will go to the capital. Gather the battle force and raise their moral with their speech. Incite them skillfully so that they can fight mercilessly even against apostles. And then, the battlefield will be the plain in front of the capital. There is no way we are going to fight inside the capital even after knowing that they will attack from the God Mountain at the back of the capital, after all.”

“In that case, we need to evacuate the people out of the capital then. Although the gate can be used, evacuating all the people in three days is… looks like we need to hurry.”

“It’s fine if we send the civilians to the empire capital in place of their battle force that we will pull on our side. right?”

“But, Nagumo-kun. To fight the apostles who can fly at the sky on a plain is disadvantageous…”

“I plan to take a measure of an anti-aircraft weapons and heavy weapons, and so on. Also, Nomura-!”

Nomura Kentarou of Nagayama party whose name was suddenly called went “oO!?” with a strange voice. Not even in his wildest dream, he imagined that his name would be called in this timing.

“You are an earth elementalist, right?”

“Eh? A, yeah. That’s right but…”

“Then, collect the workers in the capital and the guys with an aptitude for earth element magic, it’s fine even if it’s simple but create a fortress on the plain.”

“For, a fortress?”

“It’s better to have shelter right? Ask about the detail to the specialist in the capital. Later I’ll send you an artifact exclusively for you, so create a place that is easy to fight on the plain.”

“Go, got it. I’ll try.”

Further after Nomura, Hajime also gave instructions at other classmates too here and there. They nodded from being swallowed by the momentum. Hajime gave them some kind of concrete roles with the intention that they could finish this without them getting crushed by the tension that was heightening moment by moment.

Also, as soon as the production of the heavy weapons were finished, Hajime planned to send them to the capital in order, but for the lecture on how to use the weapon, it was more effective to have the classmates to do it. Even if they didn’t know the detail of the mechanism, but they should be able to handle the weapon compared to the resident of this world who in the first place didn’t know the concept of heavy firearms.

“Taniguchi, Sakagami, you two go to the forest of trees. Talk to the lot of Haulia and Fair Bergen and send the bunches that can fight to the capital. If you finished with that, contact me. I’ll receive you in Orcus. Until the time limit, you two will focus on subjugating the monsters of the abyss and strengthening them. After all, you two finally manage to get metamorphosis magic.”

“Roger!”

“Ou!”

After that, they talked a little bit more about the details, and then while floating a fearless smile before the three days that surely would be the densest time of their life, Hajime once more ran his gaze to everyone.

And then, a beat later, his mouth slowly opened.

“The enemy introduced himself as a god. In addition, he boasted mightiness that corresponds to it. Every single member of his army consist of a one man army. There are even monsters outside of common sense and strengthened puppet soldiers that don’t fear death.”

Calm voice. Yet, it resounded extremely clearly.

“But, that’s all. Those guys are not invincible or anything. Just like what I did, the god and his apostle can be killed. Humans can bring down the paranormal existence.”

The figure of the talking Hajime was one armed and one eyed with white hair that looked as though his life was sucked out from him. Those things showed the path this man who was called incompetent had walked until this point. Those were the proof of how he butchered a great number of monsters, turned them into his nourishment and crawled up here. And then, he actually showed the proof in front of everyone in this place. That human could win even against god.

That was why they naturally could understand. Even if he had lost once, even after his important person had been stolen, he would make even those situations into his nourishment. The bloodied and wounded young man in front of their eyes, turned any kind of impossible into possible.

The words that shook the heart whether one wanted it to or not continued.

“There is no need to think that this fight is for the sake of someone whose face you don’t know, much less the world. There is no need to shoulder that kind of thing. Like how I am fighting for the sake of taking back my beloved, it’s fine for everyone here to fight each for your own reason. There is nothing large or small about those reasons. There is no weight or anything. Because you want to go home. Because you want to meet your family, for the sake of your friend, for your lover, merely just for surviving, merely because you cannot stomach this… whatever is fine.”

For a beat, Hajime’s words cut off. But, everyone in this place became self-aware of their own wishes. Impulses welled up inside their chests.

As though waiting for that, Hajime unleashed his words. Blazing like flame, yet permeating like water, powerful like earth, yet enveloping like wind, it was such words…

“If there is a time where you must muster your all for once in your life, then now is exactly that time-. Right now, in this time, burn your soul! Take the step for the sake of your wish! And then, all of you survive! If you manage to do that, then I’ll present you the reward of the ticket for going home!”

The sound of gulping reverberated. A throbbing sound like alarm bell could be heard. The clenched fists, the firmly stepping feet, the gritting teeth groaned creakingly. It was as though their will naturally rose up like a roar.

Among the people who were delirious with fever, Hajime enchanted them with gleam and fangs like a wild wolf.

And then a word.

“Win.”

What came back were naturally countless roars.